WORLD / A22

No. of cancer deaths in US drops for 2nd straight year

BUSINESS / B4

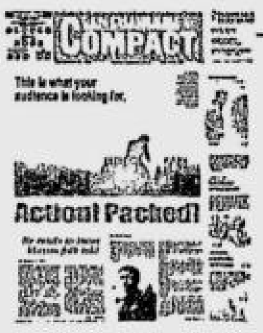
Li Ka-Shing tops Forbes' list of richest persons in China

ENTERTAINMENT / F1

What the cameras did not catch at the Golden Globe Awards

NEWS / A10

Homicide charges filed vs Leviste; Gonzalez says it may be murder



What's small but big? Turn to Page G4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, January 19, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 42 P18 website: inquirer.net

Smith to be moved to 'rusty' container van

By Volt Contreras and Armand N. Nocum

THE US MARINE CONVICTED OF RAPING A FILipino woman will soon be living in a converted cargo container van while the US Embassy building currently housing him undergoes renovation, one of his lawyers said yesterday.

Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, 21, will be moved at

SMITH/ A9

Move over Big Mac, the iPod index is here

SYDNEY—THE VENERable Big Mac, the hamburger that has for two decades doubled as a light-hearted barometer of global exchange rate trends, faces being displaced by a 21st century

MOVE/ A8

KUNG SINO ANG MURA... OK!

GMA set on finishing off terrorists with 'hand of steel'

GOOD JOB: President Arroyo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney lead the meeting of the RP-US Philippine Defense Reform Executive Steering Committee at the Department of National Defense at Camp Aguinaldo. Ms Arroyo and Kenney congratulated the military brass for the killing of top Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sulaiman under "the tremendous leadership" of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon (at right). MALACAÑANG PHOTO

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Dona Pazzibugan

WITH THE DEATH OF ABU Sayyaf leader Abu Sulaiman, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she hoped that the Philippines would shed its tag as the weak link in the global fight against terror.

In a speech yesterday at the first National Convention of the League of Cities of the Philippines at the Manila Hotel, the President said her administration was bent on "finishing the job with a hand of steel against evil."

"We have regained our place in the international landscape as a strong player in the fight against terror ... I take the opportunity to congratulate everyone involved because the highest Abu Sayyaf leader, Abu Sulaiman, has been slain," she said.

As though on cue, Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan, spokesperson of the Philippine Marines, announced that 10 suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf were killed in another encounter with government troops yesterday in Sulu.

The hourlong gun battle in Sitio Biti, Barangay Timpook, in Patikul claimed the lives of three Marines, but also resulted in the capture of three supposed mem-

GMA/ A15

'Overkill' in Iloilo attack

Deported UK priest on mine panel wants RP to explain

By Raj Padilla
Contributor

LONDON—SINCE HE WAS DEPORTED Jan. 5 from the Philippines hours after he set foot at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Fr. Frank Nally has yet to receive an explana tion from Philippine immigration authorities about his case.

"Until now I am hoping that an explanation be given but nothing has reached me or my congregation," Nally, who heads the Solidarity Desk of the Columban Fathers in the United Kingdom, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Nally, 52, said that when immigration personnel stopped him at the Naia, all he was told was, "You are blacklisted!"

But Nally suspected that his being a part of a British-funded fact -finding mission on massive mining activities in Mindanao in July last year had something to do with it.

"Halfway during the interrogation, I heard one of the immigration officials mention the word delegation. I think that was it," Nally recounted.

He was also informed that the order to deport him had come from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency.

He was held overnight, his passport

DEPORTED/ A4

OFFICERS AND GENTLEMEN The plotters allegedly of the coup attempt last February are shown in court at Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal, on Thursday but their court-martial could not proceed due to the AFP's refusal to release the pretrial investigation report. The accused say they are being tried based on secret documents. From left, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, Brig. Danny Lim, Col Ariel Querubin. They lead 28 officers and men charged with mutiny. *(Story on Page A3)* JOAN BONDOC

Filipino priest's take could top $1M

FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA—RODney L. Rodis looked like a typically successful immigrant who had made good in the United States. He lived in a $240,000 two-story brick home with a wife and three children. He had plans of someday returning to the Philippines and becoming mayor of his hometown and even President of the country.

But neighbors of Rodis' Watson Lane home were last week surprised to learn that Rodis, 50, was a Roman Catholic priest and one, moreover, who had been accused of embezzling funds that could top $1 million from a US diocese.

The Diocese of Richmond has said Rodis had taken more than $600,000 from two rural churches since 2001.

State police, however, were still hearing from parishioners whose donations could not be accounted for, and the total is "climbing every day," said Sgt. Kevin Barrick, a spokesperson for state police.

Barrick said he would not be surprised if the embezzled money surpassed $1 million.

Court records show that police last month seized from Rodis' home bank

FILIPINO/ A4

CHR, solons shocked but Puno defends policemen

By Norman Bordadora
in Manila
and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

THE COMMISSION ON HUman Rights (CHR), lawmakers, and city and town mayors have assailed the "overkill" in the police assault on the Iloilo provincial capitol on Wednesday.

With rifles drawn, some 200 battle-equipped policemen stormed the capitol, smashed glass doors and destroyed padlocked iron gates in their attempt to arrest Gov. Niel Tupas Sr., intimidate and harass his supporters, and seize control of the capitol.

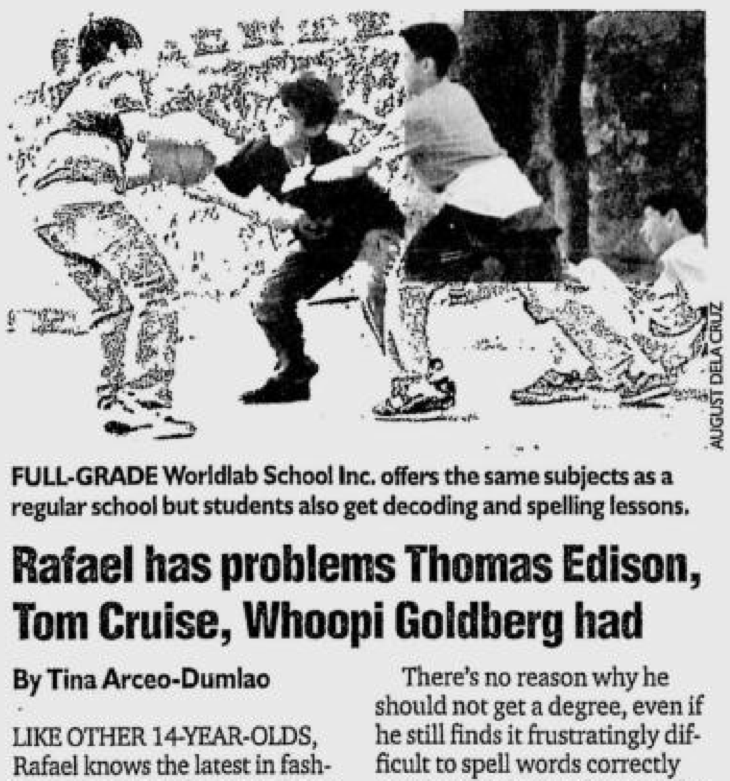
They also aimed their M-16 rifles at unarmed civilians.

The assault only stopped when the Court of Appeals in Cebu City issued a 60-day temporary restraining order against the enforcement of the dismissal order against Tupas and provincial board members Domingo Oso and Cecilia Capadosa.

CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing

OVERKILL/ A8

SPECIAL PEOPLE



FULL-GRADE Worldlab School Inc. offers the same subjects as a regular school but students also get decoding and spelling lessons.

Rafael has problems Thomas Edison, Tom Cruise, Whoopi Goldberg had

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

LIKE OTHER 14-YEAR-OLDS, Rafael knows the latest in fashion, grooves to the newest beats on music television and fervently dreams of going to college.

There's no reason why he should not get a degree, even if he still finds it frustratingly difficult to spell words correctly and reading and writing are far from automatic for him but are

RAFAEL/ A15

My daughter Mikki: Small miracles

By Fernando del Mundo

(Third of a series)

i-TEAM *Report*

WHENEVER AND WHEREVER Mikki hears bouncy pop music, she rocks and rolls.

Arms flapping, she swings to the beat, to her left, to her right.

But at 22, doing her thing in malls and restaurants draws stares and snickers.

When she becomes aware of this, she throws a tantrum, beats her head and bites the back of her hand, which is now heavily scarred.

Mikki is autistic, suffering a developmental disorder that, according to the Autism Society of the Philippines (ASP), "severely hinders the way information is gathered and processed by the brain."

Simply put, she's built a wall around herself and shut out everything else—most of the time, anyway.

ASP, which marks Autism Consciousness Week on Jan. 14-21, says the disorder afflicts 15 to 20 of 10,000 births. The number is mind-boggling.

In spite of the figure and ASP's public awareness campaigns in the past 11 years, it seems most people are clueless about the disability manifested by bizarre repetitive behavior.

When they stare at Mikki and

MY DAUGHTER/ A16

AUTHOR'S PRIDE AND JOY, Mikki is learning every day to be independent.

'I shall never let go of my little sister'

By Victoria Katrina del Mundo-Dainas

I LOOK AT HER AND WONDER, what's on her mind. Does she know who I am? Is she happy? What is she thinking of? I look into her eyes, searching for signs that she knows me. A little smile from her makes me hope that someday she will be part of our world.

Often, I play make-believe games with her, pretending she is as I am. When she looks at

I SHALL/ A16

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/18/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FrontPage

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Left out, Angara may not run

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. EDGARDO ANGARA NOW talks of running under an "independent mainstream party" along with fellow incumbent senators. But if this does not materialize, he might as well forget his bid.

After being left out in the cold by his former allies in the opposition, Angara indicated yesterday he would seek reelection only under a party that is independent of the Arroyo administration and the Estrada-led United Opposition.

"If I decide to run, my preferred scenario is that the core of the ticket will be the incumbent senators who will run as an independent mainstream party. Independent of administration; independent even of opposition," Angara, 72, told reporters.

"We can be free-thinking agents who will support a bill, not because it's partisan, not because it's political, but because it's for the country."

Angara said talks for the formation of such a ticket were ongoing. His colleagues, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Ralph Recto, confirmed this, a sign that the senatorial slates of any camp at this point were still in a "flux."

But if such a ticket isn't formed in time for the May 14 elections, Angara, one of the country's longest-serving senators and chair of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), said he might as well drop his reelection bid.

"By the end of 13th Congress, I will have served 17 years in the Senate. Probably, the longest service of any senator. If you add my other areas of public service, that's already almost 30 years of public service. I'm in a fortunate position or the luxury of not even running," he said.

Sure candidates

The UNO-led coalition disclosed Wednesday its slate of nine "sure candidates" and three possible candidates, and Angara, Sen. Joker Arroyo and detained former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan II weren't on it for different reasons.

Angara never sought the endorsement of UNO, while Arroyo has not signified his intention to seek reelection. Honasan, who is detained in a police camp on rebellion charges in connection with the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny, was dropped from the slate in view of his personal circumstances.

Angara vigorously backed the failed candidacy of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. against President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May 2004 presidential vote, but later, had a falling-out with opposition leaders after reportedly meeting with administration officials.

He was Estrada's running mate in the 1998 presidential elections. He lost, but Estrada went on to win.

In a flux

"I suspect not anyone has a firm list. So it's in flux," Angara said when asked about the UNO-led coalition slate.

In the interview with reporters, Angara said it was about time the senatorial candidates started shedding off their political affiliations and advocated the cause of the "mainstream Filipino."

"You know we're already deeply partisan in this country; we're terribly divided in this country... Should we now begin representing the mainstream Filipino, the middle Filipino who's been leaving in droves our country and looking for greener pastures because the grass here is so dry and so infertile? Why should we not now begin to speak for the mainstream Filipino?" he said.

No compulsion

And without such a ticket, the senator said then he doesn't need to run. "That's an option I think I'm fortunate I have because not many have that kind of option; everyone wants to run at all cost under whatever ticket. But me, I don't have that compulsion. I don't have that kind of pressure."

On the chances of the common ticket getting formed with less than four months to go before the vote, Angara said: "You know it's still one month away. It's still a long long time. One week in politics is like eternity."

He said he wasn't talking with either the administration or the opposition camps in connection with the May elections.

PANDAY: Transferred to Camp Crame for security reasons. RAFFY LERMA

Bersamin slay suspect moved

By Miko L. Morelos and Alcuin Papa

FORMER ARMY M/SGT. RUFINO Panday, a suspect in the killing of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. in December, was transferred to Camp Crame following a court order issued yesterday.

Judge Luisito Cortez of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 84 ordered Panday moved to the Philippine National Police Custodial Center in Crame after both the prosecution and defense panels in the case agreed to the transfer.

Panday was being held at Camp Karingal, also in Quezon City, until his lawyers, led by Rolito Abing, presented the order from the court around noon.

At about 2 p.m., Panday arrived at the PNP Custodial Center dressed in a striped shirt, jeans and slippers. His head was covered with a white towel in an attempt to hide from the media.

Before that, he underwent a physical exam at the PNP General Hospital.

Abing told reporters he hoped his client's stay at Camp Crame would be temporary. His lawyers will ask the court to send their client to a jail facility in Bicutan, Taguig City, he said.

Security concerns

In his petition to the court, Panday cited "security concerns" in his request for a jail transfer.

He said he was being forced by QC police, including Camp Karingal criminal investigation unit chief Supt. Franklin Mabanag, to admit his participation in the murder.

Panday had told police that on the day Bersamin was killed, he met with former La Paz, Abra, Vice Mayor Freddie Dupo who allegedly told him that Abra Gov. Vicente Valera had taken out a P5-million contract on Bersamin and that he (Dupo) was forming a team to kill the congressman.

Panday confessed serving as a lookout in the killings of Bersamin and his bodyguard, Adelfo Ortega, outside Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16. The Abra lawmaker had just attended the wedding of a niece.

But Panday retracted his confession on Monday, saying he had been coerced by the QC police, including Mabanag, into signing it.

He also cleared Valera of any role in the murder of Bersamin.

Fiscal Ferdinand Baylon said the accused was "a high-risk detainee" and therefore proposed his detention at the PNP Custodial Center.

Abing posed no objection.

"We want for the accused to have a neutral ground. It will be beneficial for him," Abing said. "We want to secure [Panday's] life."

Sought for his reaction to Panday's retraction on Monday, Baylon said that while the court had yet to receive Panday's statement, there still was a strong case against him.

"We still have a strong case against Panday based on the evidence we have gathered," he said.

The court had set to hear the motions to quash and the amended information for Feb. 7. But the court rescheduled both the hearings and Panday's arraignment to give the prosecution and the defense more time to prepare their cases.

DE CASTRO

Noli says he'll campaign only for 4 Senate pals

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—Vice President Noli de Castro said he would also be busy during the election season for the sake of his friends in the Wednesday Club.

Senate President Manuel Villar, Senators Joker Arroyo, Francis Pangilinan and Ralph Recto comprised the group of candidates he would campaign for, he told reporters after speaking at the opening of the two-day anti-poverty summit here.

"I will help them because they deserved to be helped," De Castro said in Filipino. The four belonged to the club whose members, mostly lawmakers, gather every Wednesday to eat and chat.

"*Subok ko na kung paano sila magtrabaho* (They've proven their worth)," he said of his former colleagues in the 12th Congress.

He said he was not going to help on the basis of party affiliations. "I help on the basis of the person's character and performance," he said.

He did not include yet Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid in his short list because the latter had not yet announced if he was running for mayor of Makati City.

Lapid, he said, used to bring to the club Kapampangan native delicacies like kamaru (crickets) and frogs. He said he had not seen the movie actor-turned-politician for several months now.

De Castro said he did not want to be involved in local politics and he was not updated with what was happening in Pampanga, where he won by a landslide over former Sen. Loren Legarda in the May 2004 elections. Their electoral dispute is pending at the Supreme Court.

De Castro assured that while some of his time would be devoted to a few friends, much of his working hours would be spent working on helping relocate families along the North Railway from Caloocan City to Clark in Pampanga and South Luzon Expressway down to Calamba in Laguna.

Some 156,000 families need to be transferred out of the way of the project's site.

According to De Castro, the anti-poverty program of the government need not be a case of the poor "*antay nang antay* (simply waiting and waiting)" or a case of the poor turning into protesters.

The government, he said, was doing programs with "direct and immediate impact on poor people." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Erap slate now has 10 bets

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA now has 10 "sure" bets for the senatorial race in May.

Raul Roco's widow Sonia met Wednesday with the detained Estrada in Tanay, Rizal, in which the leader of the United Opposition (UNO) coalition personally egged her to run under the opposition banner.

Ms Roco told the INQUIRER that Estrada made the offer in the presence of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and actors Rez Cortez and Laarni Enriquez.

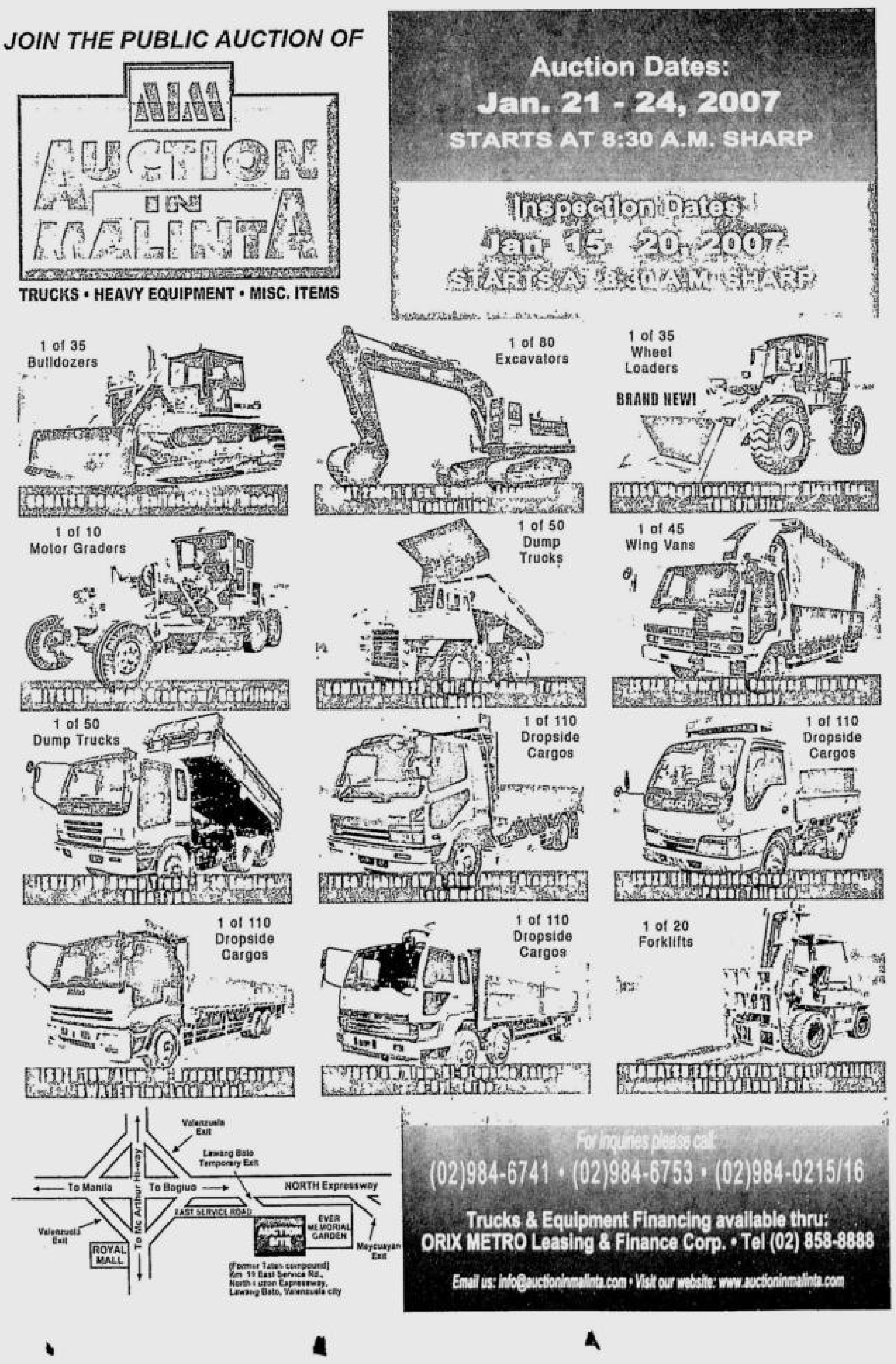
"Would you consider the No. 12 slot?" Estrada asked Ms Roco during a meeting arranged by former Senator Roco's friends from Bicol.

"Thank you, thank you," said a visibly surprised widow who had been courted by the administration camp to join its slate, but she curtly declined, telling Malacanang emissaries that her spouse' last words were "resign Gloria (President Arroyo), call a snap."

Asked why she was gunning for a Senate seat, she said: "I want to continue what Raul started. Who will take care of the seeds he had planted?"

Political allies in Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko party had advised her to take Malacanang's offer, but she said: "In the final analysis, I have to be comfortable with my conscience . that the decision I will take is the right one and from which I will be responsible."

The UNO camp released Wednesday a partial list of nine "sure" candidates, to wit: Senate President Manuel Villar and Sen. Panfilo Lacson; former Senators Loren Legarda, Vicente Sotto III and John Osmena; Representatives Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero, lawyer Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Estrada's son by actress Guia Gomez.



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Lawyers stall court-martial of 28 officers

By Dona Pazzibugan

CAMP CAPINPIN, TANAY, Rizal—The court-martial of Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, Col. Ariel Querubin and 25 other officers was stalled by wrangling over a pre-trial investigation (PTI) report that supposedly cleared the accused officers of the offense of mutiny.

The seven-man panel that will try the officers for alleged involvement in the February 2006 failed coup could not formally convene yesterday, so the trial failed to make any progress on its second hearing.

The officers are being charged with mutiny (under Article of War 67) and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman (Articles of War 96).

Lawyers of the accused officers blocked a move to swear in the members of the court led by Southern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, saying they should be first given a copy of the Oct. 25, 2006 PTI report prepared by a panel of military investigators headed by Col. Al Perreras.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon issued an order last Nov. 21 that out of 38 officers who were investigated, 30 officers of the Marines and the Scout Rangers led by Miranda, Lim and Querubin would face court-martial.

He overruled the recommendation of the PTI panel to drop the charges of mutiny against all accused and to charge only 18 officers for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, which is a lesser offense.

During the hearing last Dec. 14, Esperon ordered the court-martial panel to exclude two Marine officers from the trial, leaving 28 accused—19 from the Army and nine from the Marines.

"It's very alarming that up to now we've not been given a copy of the PTI report and intelligence report prepared by the AFP. We're afraid we are going to be prosecuted based on secret documents," said Abraham Espejo, lawyer of Lt. Col. Edmundo Malabanjot and Lt. Col. Nestor Flordeliza.

Lawyer Frank Chavez, counsel of Miranda, said the court could not convene until the accused officers get a copy of the report.

"It's their inherent right to be informed of the basis of the charges against them... It's due process that all accused should be furnished a copy. Why is this being suppressed?" he said.

But Yano said that until the court was formally constituted it could not rule on the defense lawyers' motion to get the PTI report.

Col. Marian Aliedo, the court's lawyer member, said the defense would be furnished copies of the PTI report "through channels."

Military prosecutors said the document was not necessary for the trial.

Col. Ukol Paglala, the Trial Judge Advocate, cited a 1989 Supreme Court ruling on the Col. Antonio Romero vs Chief of Staff, AFP coup d'etat case to argue that the high court had ruled that the rebel officers were not denied due process even if they did not have the PTI report.

Defense lawyers pointed out that in 1989, the rebel officers did not participate in the pre-trial investigation unlike in the current case.

The hearing adjourned after three hours without the deadlock being resolved.

Bibit faces graft raps

By Norman Bordadora

OMBUDSMAN MERceditas Gutierrez yesterday charged former Cebu City Customs District Collector Billy Bibit and two other Bureau of Customs officials before the Sandiganbayan with graft.

In a 19-page resolution, the Ombudsman investigators recommended the filing of charges for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act against Bibit, customs examiner Eunice Aguilar and intelligence officer Troy Tan, all of the Port of Cebu in Cebu City.

The case against Bibit was in connection with the alleged illegal confiscation of 600 metric tons of Canadian wheat owned by complainant Selpha Trinidad in 2005.

In her complaint, Trinidad said the unloading of the shipment was stopped by the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service for lack of proper import documents.

She, however, said that she did not need import documents since she was merely the local buyer of the wheat from local supplier Quality Grains and Feeds Corp.

After presenting the sales documents covering her purchase, the CIIS allowed the unloading to proceed.

Two days later, however, she said, the unloading of the shipment "was again stopped for not being covered by proper import documents."

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Filipino priest's take could top $1M

From page A1

records and other items, including a receipt for a money-wiring service to the Philippines.

Rodis, who faces a felony embezzlement charge, retired last year because of health problems after leading the congregations of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Bumpass and St. Jude Catholic Church in Mineral, both of which belong to the Diocese of Richmond. He was a pastor of both parishes since 1993.

Authorities allege Rodis opened an account in a church's name at a bank, deposited donations into the account and then diverted them to his personal use.

Donor's question

The diocese said it became aware of financial irregularities in the fall when a church donor requested verification of a $1,000 contribution for tax purposes and the parish could not find a record of the donation.

A report from the Times-Dispatch newspaper in the US quoted the Richmond diocesan lawyer, William Etherington, as saying that the Catholic Diocese was also surprised to hear about Rodis' living arrangement.

The report said Rodis had told neighbors that he was in the import-export business and was often gone for long periods. One neighbor found Rodis' vagueness about what he did so strange he thought he might have been in the federal witness protection program.

3 daughters

The Times-Dispatch report identified Rodis' wife as a Joyce Sillador who was said to be a nurse. Neighbors estimated the ages of their three daughters as ranging from at least 5 to the early 20s.

Rodis was ordained a priest in the Order of St. Camillus in the Philippines in 1986 and has been living in the US since 1991, according to the Times-Dispatch report.

The Philippine Province of the Order of St. Camillus was started by two Italian religious sent to the Philippines for further studies at the Loyola School of Theology in the 1970s. The congregation was founded in Italy by St. Camillus de Lellis, a reformed gambler who dedicated his life to the care of the sick. Camillus was canonized in 1746 and later declared the patron saint of the sick, health care practitioners and hospitals.

Vow of poverty

Men of the Order of St. Camillus, more popularly called Camillans, take a vow of poverty but Everington said Rodis quit the order in 2002 when he joined the Richmond diocese.

The lawyer said the diocese paid its priests P18,000 a year, plus a car allowance and room and board. *With AP*

Deported UK priest on mine panel wants RP to explain

From page A1

was confiscated and he was put on a plane to Hong Kong early the next day. He got his passport back from Hong Kong airport personnel.

Fact-finding mission on mining

"There was no explanation whatsoever. I was not offered food or drink and was not allowed to use my mobile phone to call people who could help me out," Nally said.

With Nally on the fact-finding mission that was funded by Cafod (an international Catholic food agency) was British Member of Parliament Clare Short.

Blair Cabinet

Short once served in Prime Minister Tony Blair's Cabinet as secretary of state for international development.

Mining expert Clive Wicks of the World Conservation Union was also in the group.

Nally flew to Manila two weeks ago to coordinate the release of the fact-finding team's report on the impact of foreign mining firms on the Philippine environment and communities.

Simultaneous launching

The report is to be simultaneously launched in London and Manila on Jan. 25. The 62-page report covers legal, environmental and political issues and gives a number of recommendations.

Short and Nally organized the fact-finding team following an appeal from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines for foreign assistance in its fight against large-scale mining which threatens ancestral lands and the remaining forests in the country.

One of the places they visited was Midsalip in Zamboanga del Sur which, according to Nally, has 70 percent of its land under mining and exploration applications.

Tarsier, Philippine Eagle

Aside from being the ancestral land of the Subanen people, Midsalip, particularly its mountains, is home to the Philippine tarsier and the Philippine eagle, both endangered species.

From what he had observed even before the fact-finding team could start its investigation, Nally said he believed that the Philippine government allowed big mining companies to devour lands at the expense of indigenous people who rely on them for their livelihood.

"Mining is being presented as the savior of the Philippine economy and [as a means for the] alleviation of poverty. The experience is the opposite. It causes poverty and environmental degradation," Nally earlier wrote in one of his letters to his congregation, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

After hearing about his ordeal at the Naia, the Columban Missionary Society, with headquarters in Ireland, scored the Philippine government for subjecting Nally to such treatment.

Very disturbing

Fr. Tommy Murphy, the superior general of the Columbans, described the incident as "very disturbing" even as he urged the Philippine government to review and reverse the case promptly.

"The attention his exclusion and deportation bring to the issues involved will hearten those ordinary Filipinos who risk their lives to defend their lands and communities against the activities of foreign mining companies," Murphy said in a statement.

Political killings

He added: "It seems strange that the Philippine government would feel threatened by the presence of an Irish Columban priest, who is asking questions about the activities of mining companies. One can only assume that they have succumbed to the pressure exerted by these companies."

Another possible reason Nally was barred from entering the country could be his having brought to Blair's attention the spate of political killings in the Philippines.

"It is through letters written about the growing number of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines to Prime Minister Tony Blair may also have added to the sensitivities of the Philippine authorities," a leading Catholic newspaper in Britain said.

"The Universe" bannered Nally's deportation in its Jan. 17 issue.

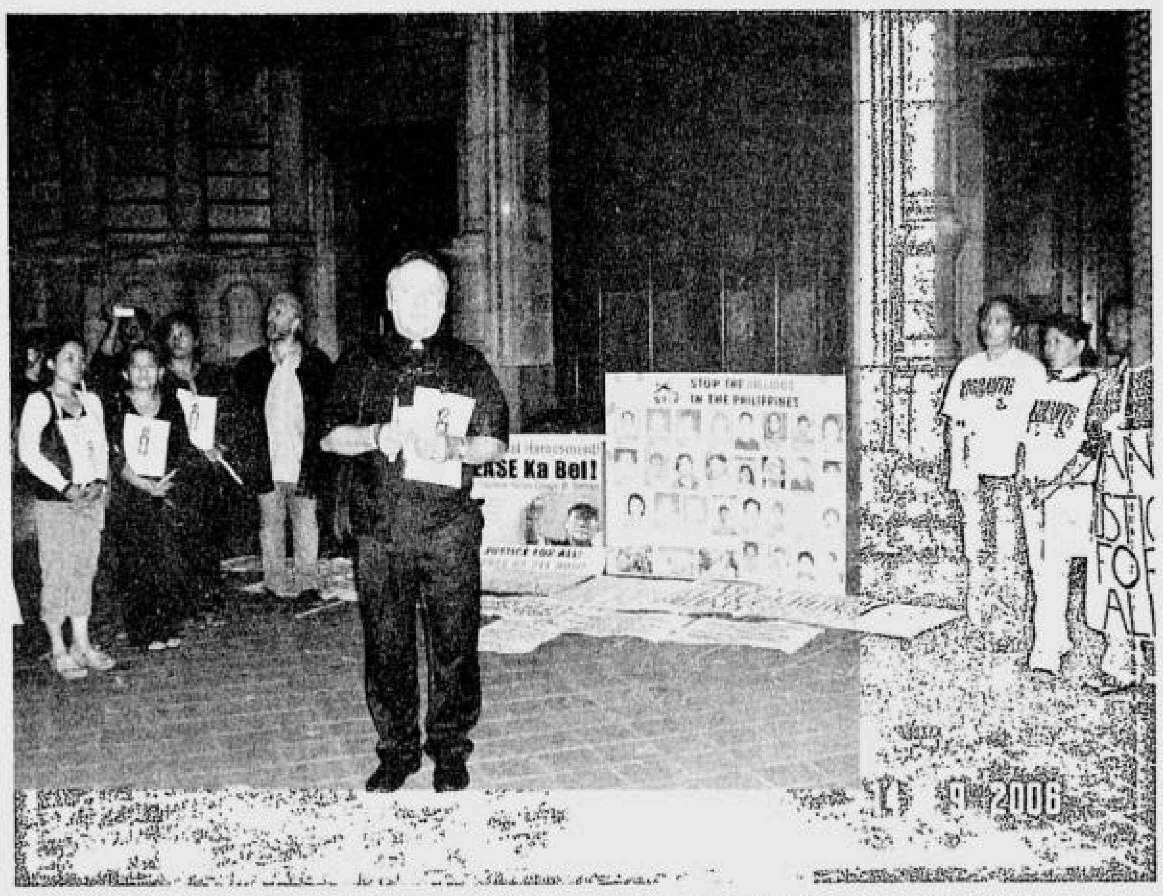
Nally wrote to Blair a few days before President Macapagal-Arroyo visited London.

Fascistic

Days after Nally was deported, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. denounced the "fascistic treatment" of the priest, who used to serve in parishes in Mindanao.

Pimentel said the shameful incident betrayed the Arroyo administration's "insincerity" and "double talk" in inviting foreign observers to look into the human rights situation in the country.

(Raj Padilla is a former correspondent of Inquirer Visayas.)



FILIPINO AT HEART, Fr. Frank Nally speaks before members of the Filipino community in front of the Westminster Cathedral in London last September while holding a prayer vigil for the series of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

RAJ PADILLA

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 17 ISSUE, a Metro story on Page A18—"Cheap courses for Munti studes"—misstated the surname of the public information officer of Muntinlupa City. The city's public information officer is Tez Valencia—not Navarro.

* * *

IN SOME COPIES of the Jan. 18 issue, the caption of a front-page photo of Chin-Chin Gutierrez misstated the date her mother, Cecilia Arnaldo-Gutierrez, died. Mrs. Gutierrez died due to complications from diabetes on Jan. 12—not Jan. 3.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Notice is hereby given that the final draws has been held in the presence of an independent auditor, KPMG, Certified Public Accountant, a representative from the Department of Trade and Industry on January 12, 2007 at the offices of Reader's Digest in Singapore. The Local First Prize was drawn on January 5, 2007 at the offices of A-Z Direct Marketing, Inc.
The Reader's Digest official list of winners should all cases be conclusive. All the winners will be notified by registered mail on how to claim the prize. In case of queries, please write to us at A-Z DIRECT MARKETING INC.
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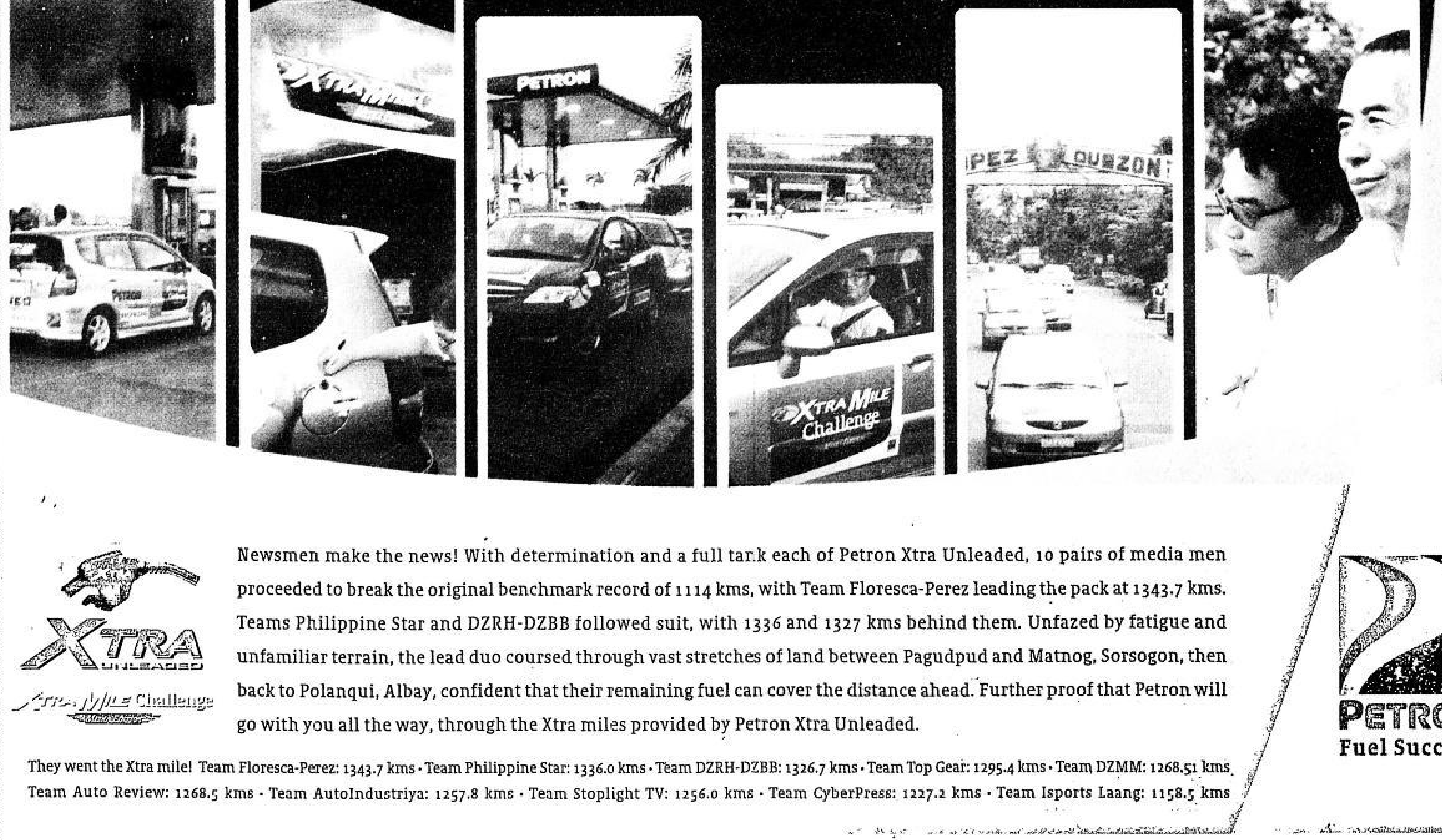

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A Message from the President of the Republic of the Philippines

Today, January 19, 2007, I affix anew the seal of my Office to display the unwavering commitment, and support of the Government, to reform our country's Land Administration and Management sector. This is one of the core elements in my administration's "Beat-the-Odds" programme of governance to alleviate poverty and accelerate economic development.

I believe there's no better occasion for me to say this, than today, when the primary movers and partners of this initiative are all gathered, together with our country's key decision-makers, in the hope of further boosting reforms.

Truly, there's a huge untapped potential in the land administration and management (LAM) sector that, if harnessed to the fullest, can become a powerful instrument for the country's campaign to defeat poverty and promote economic growth.

I laud the strategies and directions being taken by the lead government departments to achieve our desired LAM reforms. But just as in any endeavor, much can still be done, especially if we stand undaunted by temporal concerns that tend to blur our long term goals. This gathering is one good example of strategic thinking.

The Government will remain a constant advocate of change, whenever and wherever it is needed, especially for the country's finite but most valuable resource which is our lands.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

High-Level Policy Forum

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Land Administration and Management (LAM) Sector in the Philippines: Strategic Reforms to Sustainably Manage the Country's Most Basic Natural Resource

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Chairperson, Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senate of the Philippines

H.E. Tony Hely
Australian Ambassador

Hon. Congressman Leovigildo B. Banaag
Chairperson, Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives

Hon. Congressman Eduardo C. Zialcita
Chairperson, Committee on Housing and Urban Development
House of Representatives

Mr. James Warren Evans
Sector Director, Environment, World Bank - Washington

Hon. Manuel D. Gerochi
Undersecretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Hon. Ramon N. Guico, Jr.
President, League of Municipalities of the Philippines

Presentations By:

Hon. Justice Oswaldo D. Agcaoili (Retired)
Court of Appeals of the Philippines

DDG Augusto Santos
National Economic and Development Authority

Mr. Keith Bell
LAMP2 Task Team Leader, WorldBank

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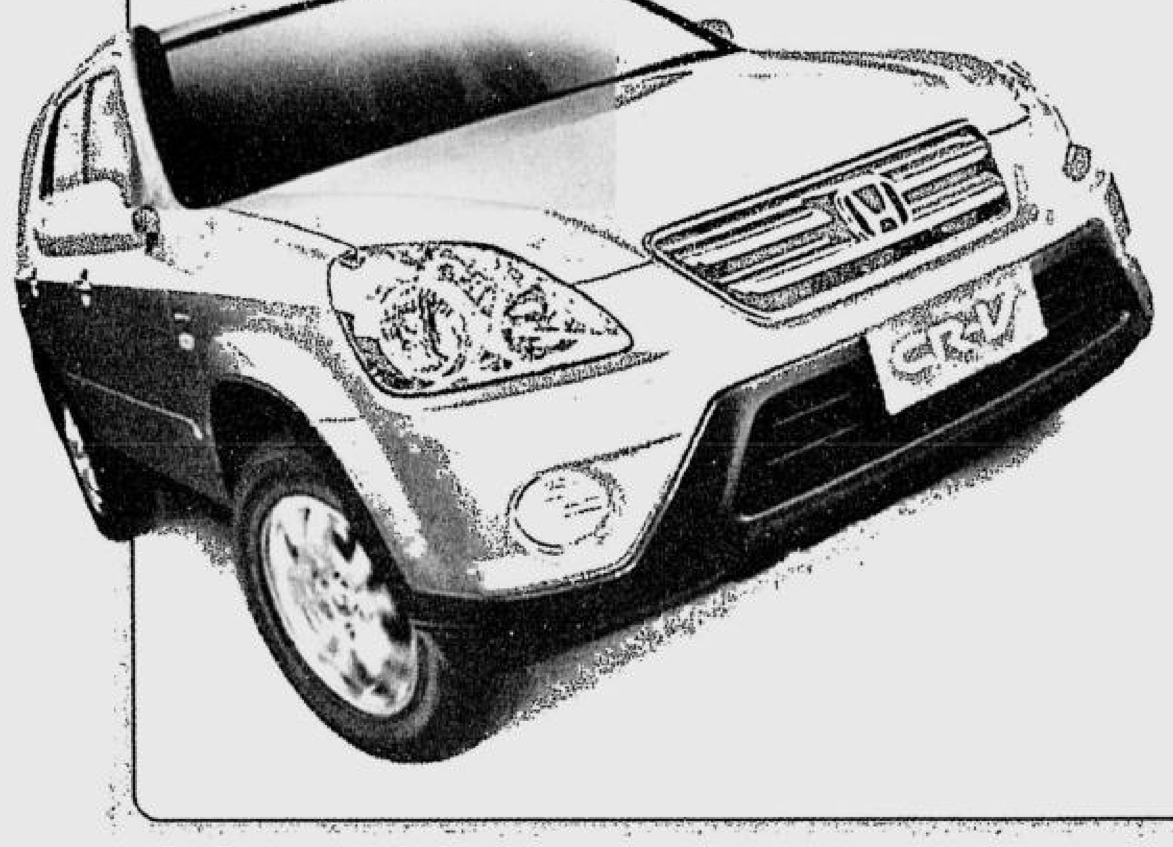

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HONDA

Puno gives Batangas gov, Jaen mayor until today

By Norman Bordadora and Alcuin Papa

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO Puno yesterday gave Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez and Jaen, Nueva Ecija, Mayor Antonio Esquivel until the close of office hours today to quit their offices, unless they can obtain relief from the courts.

Puno said he had received assurances from Sanchez and Esquivel that they and their supporters would leave the Batangas City capitol and the Jaen town hall, respectively, by 5 p.m. today.

"They showed good faith by removing the barricades and the tension has been defused already," Puno said.

The Ombudsman placed Sanchez on preventive suspension while he is under investigation for an allegedly irregular multimillion-peso computerization contract even as it dismissed Esquivel for grave misconduct for illegally dismissing three employees of the Jaen water district.

Puno said the local executives who will take over from Sanchez and Esquivel had no objections to the extensions being given.

Puno said that the police assault on the Iloilo capitol last Wednesday where another dismissed official, Gov. Niel Tupas, had barricaded himself with his supporters while waiting for a court to issue an injunction against his dismissal, was not a factor in the decision to extend the deadline.

"As early as Wednesday morning, barricades were already being removed. The extension of the deadline in Batangas and Jaen and the Iloilo situation are separate issues," Puno said.

Puno said Sanchez and Esquivel needed more time so they could orderly disperse their supporters. He said Sanchez, in a letter sent early yesterday, wanted more time so he could give his supporters who had come from all over Batangas a proper send-off.

"He did not want to send them off hastily. He wanted to assist them in their return to their respective towns," Puno explained.

He said he had allowed the two officials to stay on until 5 p.m. today "on the condition that they will not sign any order and that they will not prevent those who took over from conducting government business."

Puno said the tension in the Batangas provincial capitol has abated and "the general atmosphere there is peaceful." He said Sanchez had as early as Wednesday already ordered the removal of the barricades.

He said Sanchez's preventive suspension and Esquivel's dismissal were already in effect.

Puno said Sanchez himself told him that he had not exercised his powers as governor of the province since Monday.

"He has just been physically there. But he has not been undertaking the functions of governor which means he has been complying with the orders of the Ombudsman. So we will be granting him this request," Puno said.

He said he had directed the Philippine National Police command in Batangas to supervise the pullout of Sanchez and his followers.

In Batangas City, Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan, Philippine National Police Calabarzon regional director, confirmed the deadline extension, saying Sanchez and his supporters agreed they "would be leaving the capitol if there are no legal papers or temporary restraining order issued by the courts within the period."

At least 500 political supporters of Sanchez trooped to the capitol on Friday last week, barricading themselves with trucks, container vans and buses.

Senior Supt. Edmund Zaide, the Batangas City police chief, said Sanchez's 14 police escorts had been reinstated until today, on the governor's request.

Sources close to Vice Gov. Richard Recto said he had no plans to take over the capitol "until Sanchez and his supporters leave."

The Ombudsman was acting on a corruption complaint that Recto filed against Sanchez alleging that a contract P350-million computerization project had been illegally awarded to relatives of the governor.

In Jaen, following about three hours of negotiation with local interior department and police officials, Esquivel agreed to voluntarily leave at 5 p.m. today even if he is unable to get a temporary restraining order from a court, according to Abraham Pascua, Nueva Ecija director of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Santiago Austria, the new Jaen town mayor, consented to the agreement.

But Esquivel's supporters said they were still hoping that a court would issue a TRO by today, their confidence bolstered by reports that Tupas had been granted a TRO by the Court of Appeals in Cebu.

Esquivel has been holding office at the town hall since Monday night. ***With reports from Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon Tonette Orejas and Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon***

'Overkill' in Iloilo attack; CHR shocked

From page A1

called the team that stormed the capitol "enraged."

"When you point a gun at somebody, is it just to poke him on the head? Their posture appeared that they were ready to shoot," Quisumbing said in a telephone interview.

"If shots had been fired, it would have been a massacre," she said.

Quisumbing said she was "shocked to see policemen going into a public building with assault rifles in a manner not consonant with the picture we are trying to portray of a peaceful country of law-abiding citizens."

"If this can happen in broad daylight to an elected official and (before) the media, (how much) more at night in the barrios?" she said.

But Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno defended the police.

"The policemen ... should not be condemned. They should even be commended," Puno said.

Human rights violations

Based on her initial assessment, Quisumbing said the police committed human rights violations.

The CHR will set up a desk at the provincial capitol to gather the testimonies of those injured in the assault.

Chris Montaño of the CHR in Western Visayas, said appropriate charges would be filed against those found to have violated the human rights of Tupas' supporters.

Tupas' son, Mayor Raul Tupas of Barotac Viejo town, said at least 50 of their supporters and provincial government employees were hurt in the melee after the antiriot policemen pushed back those assembled at the capitol's entrance.

Snipers

Puno justified the assault, saying that there was no sign of the tension easing at the capitol despite hours of negotiations between the government authorities and Tupas' camp.

"It was getting late. It was already 5:30 (p.m.). When night falls and the situation has yet to be resolved, the situation changes altogether," Puno said.

"There is already the danger of snipers in the dark," he said.

Iloilo police officials yesterday said they also received information that Tupas' supporters inside the capitol had firearms.

"The police received general guidelines on how to proceed but were given discretion as to when," Puno said.

Senior Supt. Pedro Merced, 6th Regional Mobile Group commander, said his 65-man team from Negros entered the capitol in close-quarter battle formation because of information that people in the building were armed with M-16 rifles, machine pistols and shotguns.

"But when we entered we were surprised that there were no armed men," he said.

Merced said his men did not commit any human rights violations, manhandle or harm anybody, as they were just enforcing an order to secure and clear the area, and arrest the governor if he refused to leave the building.

Operation a success

Puno said the police operation "in general" was a success.

"I did not see any deployment of unnecessary force. There were no serious injuries. No shots were fired," Puno told the INQUIRER.

"They accomplished what they were told to do. When they were presented with the temporary restraining order, they withdrew," he said of the police team.

Lawless lawmen

Senators Ralph Recto and Edgardo Angara decried the police action.

"The firepower of 200 cops to serve an order of dismissal is an abusive use of force," Recto said.

Angara agreed: "I think that's lawless on the part of the law enforcement officers."

In the House of Representatives, Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico called for the immediate transfer from the province of the policemen involved in the operation.

"An investigation on the manner of the takeover is in order," Suplico said.

House Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo said the "overkill" could not have been done without the blessings of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Ronaldo Puno.

For his part, House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano said the attempted takeover of the capitol showed that Malacañang was subscribing to "politics and survival above all."

"The Arroyo administration is so desperate to scare and intimidate critics into silence that it's willing to destroy legal processes and institutions. People are quiet and patient but they are not stupid," he said.

Brazen

At a press conference with Tupas at the Iloilo provincial capitol, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said the forcible removal of local officials showed a "growing brazenness and utter disregard of the rule of law" by the administration.

Binay, who heads the United Opposition, urged local government executives to close ranks and stand firm "to preserve local authority and autonomy."

In Manila, Mayor Lito Atienza, president of the Metro Manila Mayors League, said "bad timing" marred the implementation of the suspension and dismissal orders on local officials.

Why implement now?

"You do not serve suspension orders on the eve of the campaign period. These cases have long been pending, why implement it only now?" Atienza told reporters.

The League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) expressed its concern to Ms Arroyo over the way authorities were implementing dismissal or suspension orders on certain local executives.

LCP president Jerry Trenias, mayor of Iloilo City, said the President assured him that the matter would be looked into.

Ms Arroyo was able to chat with Trenias and other mayors at the first convention of the LCP at the Manila Hotel.

Truncheon

Senior Supt. Merced acknowledged that a truncheon of a Crowd Dispersal Management team member injured Iloilo provincial administrator Manuel Mejorada.

Merced said his team was ordered to go to Iloilo but he did not know what their mission was until they were briefed upon arrival.

Negotiations were conducted between Chief Supt. Wilfredo Dulay, Western Visayas police chief, and Tupas and two 30-minute extensions were given before Dulay was ordered to enter the building.

Following orders

Dulay said the police went to the provincial capitol to stop "anarchy" because of Tupas' refusal to step down even if the Department of Interior and Local Government had already sworn in Vice Gov. Roberto Armada and provincial board member Emmanuel Gallar as governor and vice governor, respectively.

He said the assault force was expecting armed resistance, especially from provincial jail guards who are under the office of the governor.

"Our men were ordered not to fire back unless fired upon and they followed this order," said Dulay in a telephone interview. ***With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Christine O. Avendaño and Tina G. Santos***

Move over Big Mac, the iPod index is here

From page A1

rival—the iPod music player.

An Australian bank Thursday unveiled a new indicator of future foreign exchange directions based on Apple's ubiquitous iPod that it says is more accurate than the Big Mac Index introduced by the Economist magazine in 1986.

88M units sold

The CommSec iPod Index, which predicted a rally in the US dollar, forecasts trends by assessing whether a currency is under or overvalued against other units by assessing the price of Apple's portable music player, which has sold 88 million units worldwide since 2002.

Its developers say the index is less likely to be warped by local costs and tariffs than the indicator based on the famed fast-food meal, which is made identically throughout the world.

"A key difference between the iPod and Big Mac approaches is that Big Macs are made in a host of countries across the globe, whereas iPods are predominantly made in China," said Commonwealth Securities (CommSec) chief economist Craig James.

"Simply, an iPod nano should broadly cost the same across the globe. If there were substantial price differences customers would switch their purchases to other countries, especially given the power of the Internet," he said.

The Big Mac Index is based on the theory of purchasing power parity, which suggests that, in the long run, exchange rates move to equalize the prices of identical goods and services in different countries.

Under the theory, if a McDonald's Big Mac burger is cheaper in a particular country than it is in the United States when expressed in US dollars, then that country's currency may be seen as undervalued and could go up to correct the imbalance.

First forecast

But CommSec's James said the Big Mac index could be distorted by taxes, transport costs, labor laws and trade barriers in each country as they are locally made in each nation, while the iPod is mostly manufactured in China.

The first forecast of currencies of 26 countries—based on the price of a two gigabyte iPod nano in US dollars—suggests that the US dollar has potential to rally.

Brazil is the most expensive place to buy an iPod at $327.71, and the lowest is in Canada at $144.20, while the United States price is $149 and at $172.36 in Australia.

"While the initial results are at odds with many analysts, we will have to wait and see," said James.

"The index suggests that the US dollar has potential to appreciate against a range of major currencies," he said.

But the iPod index does not meet all the criteria to illustrate purchasing power theory, as freight costs will vary from country to country, and countries like the United States may get volume discounts, James conceded.

"No PPP (purchasing power parity) approach is perfect, just as no currency model is completely accurate," he said.

However, the iPod is tradeable across country borders and is the same around the globe. "So it may provide a purer assessment of currencies."

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Smith to be moved to 'rusty' container van

From page A1

SMITH confined in a freight box.

the end of the month from the Jusmag building to the makeshift quarters placed "just next" to the building, assisting counsel Joan de Venecia told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

De Venecia said the metal "box" was still "rusty" when she saw it the last time she visited her client on Monday.

Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop confirmed that the Jusmag building was scheduled for renovation and that Smith would be "moved slightly to a different facility" in the embassy compound on Roxas Boulevard in Manila. He declined to provide details.

De Venecia surmised that the container van would shortly be converted into a bedroom and installed with electricity.

According to De Venecia, Smith's parents and two brothers—all based in St. Louis, Missouri—are expected to visit him in late February or late March.

Called a "container van," the standard freight box usually measures 20 or 40 feet in length, and is sufficiently spacious to serve as a portable office or barracks, especially at construction work sites.

On Dec. 4, Smith was convicted by Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon of raping "Nicole" on Nov. 1, 2005, while on shore leave at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Nicole's suit

On the legal front, the 16th Division of the Court of Appeals yesterday directed Smith and the Office of the Solicitor General to comment on the suit filed by Nicole questioning the legality of the Philippine government's transfer of the Marine from the Makati City jail to the US Embassy without a court order.

The court ordered Smith's lawyers and Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura to file their comments within 10 days.

The resolution was written by Associate Justice Ricardo R. Rosario and concurred in by Associate Justices Rebecca de Guia Salvador and Magdangal M. de Leon.

Through her lawyer Evalyn Ursua, Nicole also asked the court to issue a warrant of arrest for Smith to enable the Philippine government to reclaim custody of the Marine.

She likewise assailed the controversial decision of the executive branch, through the Departments of Interior and Local Government, Foreign Affairs and Justice, to have Smith removed from the Makati City jail and transferred to the US Embassy close to midnight on Dec. 29.

On Jan. 3, with Smith back in US custody, the appellate court ruled as "moot" the Marine's appeal questioning his continued detention at the city jail where Judge Pozon had ordered him committed.

But it upheld Pozon's commitment order and the latter's stand that Smith should be in Philippine custody for the duration of the appeals process.

Smith's escape

Nicole's lawyer Ursua said Smith should be considered as having escaped from prison and, thus, "deemed to have withdrawn his appeal" of conviction.

She said that under the Rules of Court, an appeal may be dismissed if the appellant escaped from prison or confinement, jumped bail, or fled to a foreign country while the appeal was pending.

"Undoubtedly, too, his escape from the Makati City Jail to the premises of the US Embassy is tantamount to flight to a foreign country," Ursua said.

The lawyer also said Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo "committed grave abuse of discretion" when he entered into an agreement last December with US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, which was subsequently used as the basis for Smith's return to US custody.

Agreement invalid

Ursua said the agreement was invalid because it had the nature of "effecting the release of Daniel Smith without court authority and turning him over to the US Embassy."

Smith and his three co-accused (since acquitted) had remained in US custody during the marathon trial at Pozon's court.

The soldier's clandestine transfer back to US custody—which was arranged by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno as ostensibly called for under the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement—triggered an uproar.

Last year, Nicole's camp also filed a suit before the Supreme Court questioning the validity of portions of the agreement that governs the conduct of visiting American troops.

Romulo goes abroad to report on Asean gains

FOREIGN SECRETARY Alberto Romulo flew on an official trip to New York, Washington DC, and Davos, Switzerland, Wednesday night, the Department of Foreign Affairs disclosed yesterday.

In a statement, Romulo said he will report on the "gains" made during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations and 2nd East Asia summits recently hosted by the country in Cebu, when he meets with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in New York.

In the US capital, he will also bring the matter up with the Asean Washington committee and "meet with key officials to discuss how we can further expand Philippines-US cooperation in defense, security and development assistance," he added.

At the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, he will be with the party of President Macapagal Arroyo, who will be addressing the gathering on Jan. 26. *Volt Contreras*

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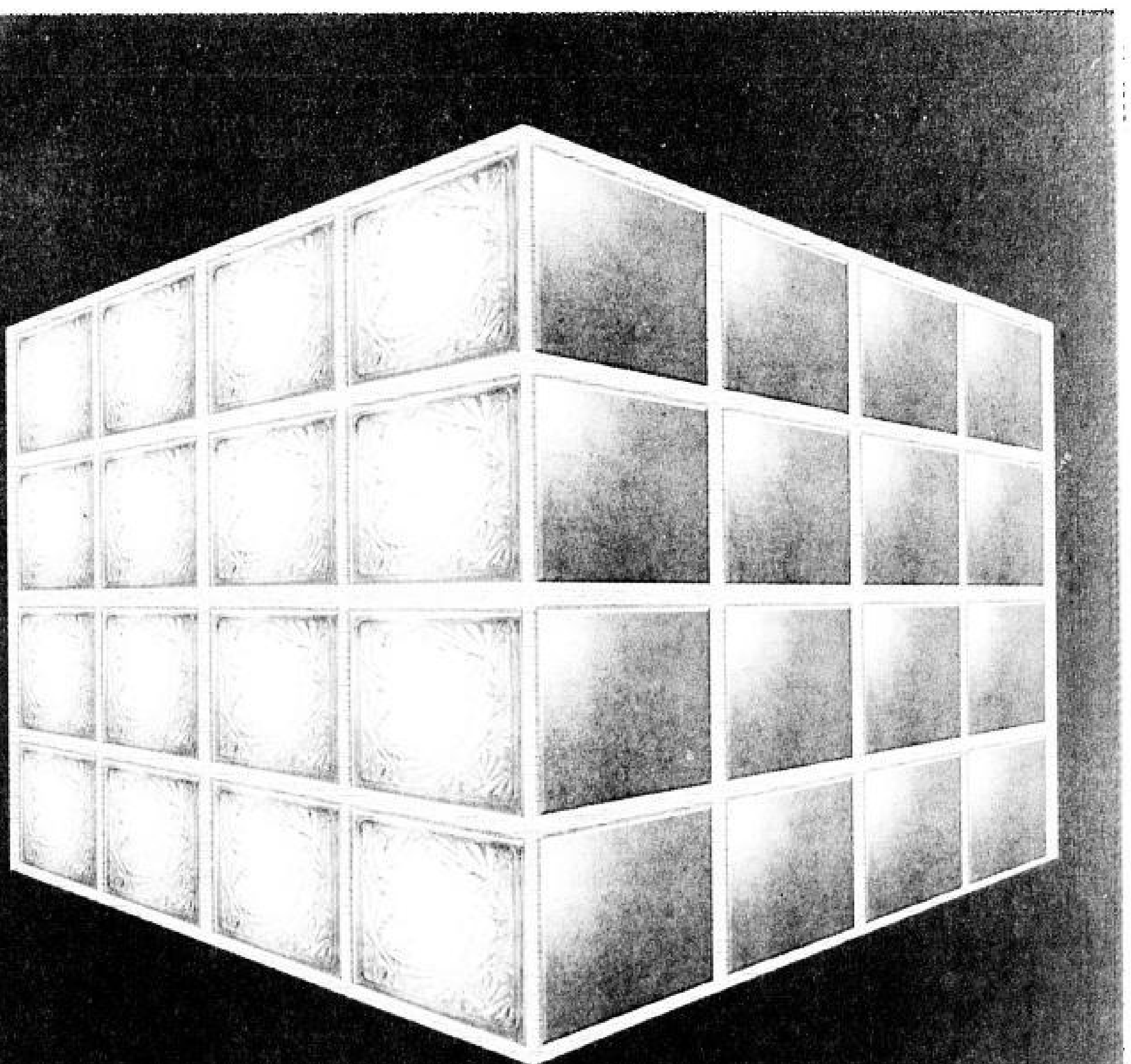

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0024, Series of 2007

Leviste to stand trial for homicide, not murder

By Tarra Quismundo and Armand Nocum

IT MAY HAVE BEEN MURDER TO the victim's relatives, but businessman Antonio "Tony" Leviste will stand trial for a lesser offense.

Prosecutors yesterday ruled out murder and adopted the original charge of homicide that police had filed against Leviste, a former Batangas governor and estranged husband of politician Loren Legarda, for the killing of his aide Rafael de las Alas a week ago.

Claiming self-defense, the 67-year-old Leviste, still confined at the Makati Medical Center for hypertension, has confessed to shooting De las Alas, 68, his executive assistant, inside Leviste's office at the ninth floor of LPL Towers on Legaspi Street in Makati.

However, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the killing, saying a recent autopsy showed there could have been "premeditation" on the part of Leviste to kill his aide.

"The number of shots fired show there is evident premeditation because if you just want to maim somebody without really an intention to kill, you will not fire more than one shot," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview as he explained why he asked the NBI to get into the picture.

"Based on the number of shots fired, it looks like it's not homicide," he said, noting that while the police was filing homicide charges, the NBI investigation would determine whether there was murder.

"We want to find out what really happened there," he said.

Still, in a resolution that he filed with the court yesterday, prosecutor Henry Salazar said the killing, having been preceded by a heated altercation, could not have been carefully and deliberately planned "as to consider the presence of the attendant circumstance of evident premeditation."

Salazar said he based his findings on the evidence that investigators had submitted with the homicide complaint filed against Leviste.

No element of murder

He said there was no element of murder in the case, as laid down in the Revised Penal Code, making the shooting of De las Alas a case of homicide.

Murder, which carries a heavier penalty, is committed with premeditation and treachery, both of which Salazar found lacking in the incident.

Prosecutors recommended bail of P40,000, which Leviste paid in cash through his lawyer Henry Capela hours after the case was raffled to Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150.

Sigh of relief

According to Alex Avisado Jr., another Leviste lawyer, the legal team gave "a sigh of relief" with the resolution as it removed doubts about Leviste's claim that he shot De las Alas in self-defense.

The children of De las Alas said they would ask for a review of the prosecutor's resolution recommending the filing of homicide charges against the former Batangas governor, according to their lawyer.

The lawyer said the children, Dinna and Nazareth, would also ask for a re-investigation of the case and request that a hold departure order be issued against Leviste.

Central to the family's belief that the victim was murdered was a gunshot wound that De las Alas sustained at the back of the head.

An autopsy report by the Southern Police District Crime Laboratory showed that the victim sustained five gunshot wounds: one on his left forearm, three on the left side of his face and one just above the nape.

The results of a crime scene investigation showed that De las Alas was holding a 9mm pistol during the shooting.

Investigators said this was "indicative that he had also the opportunity to use [it] against the respondent … which may disprove any supposition that the ways and means employed by the respondent tended to insure its execution without risk to himself."

The prosecutor's resolution theorized that "the wound in the back [of the head] might have been the last one inflicted or might have been inflicted by accident in the course of the fight."

Clustering of wounds

"The clustering of gunshot wounds at the head of the victim may indicate suddenness of the attack, but that alone does not, in itself, suffice to support a finding of treachery," it read.

The prosecutor gave weight to the sworn statement of a witness who related hearing Leviste and De las Alas in a "heated argument" minutes before the shooting.

With a report from Margaux C. Ortiz

ABS-CBN wants SC to stop probe of stampede

By Armand Nocum

TOP EXECUTIVES OF ABS-CBN YESTERDAY asked the Supreme Court to nullify the Court of Appeals' resolution upholding the Department of Justice's right to conduct a preliminary investigation into the criminal liability of the network's officials in the Feb. 4, 2006, "Wowowee" stampede in Pasig City, claiming the DOJ was biased.

In a 69-page petition for review, the ABS-CBN officials also sought the issuance of a restraining order enjoining the DOJ's prosecutors from continuing with the preliminary investigation or "desist from filing an information, and in the event that an information has been filed, to withdraw it and stop from prosecuting the case."

The petitioners were led by Ma. Rosario "Charo" Santos-Concio, executive vice president; Maria Socorro Vidanes, senior vice president for television production, and Marilou Almaden, executive producer, and others accused in the stampede that killed 74 people.

In accusing the DOJ of bias, the TV executives cited the public comments made by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez which tended to show that the DOJ had prejudged the case.

"Any panel created by the Department of Justice remains part of the [DOJ], and is therefore also tainted by the bias and partiality of the secretary of justice," the network executives said.

They cited, for example, Gonzalez's statement that there was negligence on the part of the organizers of "Wowowee" in admitting the thousands of people who had wanted to watch its popular noontime show live.

They said Gonzalez had also made a statement effectively holding the network executives responsible for the incident, "at least on the civil aspect."

The appellate court had denied the network executives' petition for certiorari seeking to stop the DOJ's preliminary investigation in a May 24, 2006, decision, as well as the executives' motion for reconsideration on Oct. 10, 2006.

The DOJ's five-man investigation panel headed by Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera III has yet to come up with a resolution on the reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple physical injuries charges filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

GSIS to weed out fake pensioners

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System (GSIS) said it had found that between 15,000 and 20,000 of those receiving monthly survivor pensions had been using dubious identities.

The monthly benefits these questionable claimants had been receiving have therefore been temporarily suspended, the GSIS said.

A survivor's pension is received by the family of a GSIS member who had died.

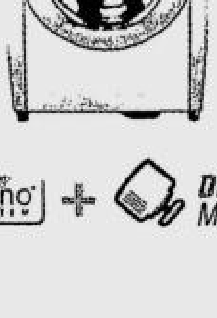
GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia told the INQUIRER that his office had begun investigating the validity of these recipients' claims. He said the GSIS was currently coordinating with the National Statistics Office to confirm the validity of their claims.

Garcia explained that these claimants had been placed in the "dubious" list because some of the information on their deceased GSIS member-relatives that they had submitted to the agency did not match the records in the GSIS database.

This information, Garcia said, included the GSIS identification card numbers of the deceased GSIS members and their dates of birth.

Because they had given the wrong identification numbers and dates of birth of their deceased relatives, Garcia said, the GSIS had every reason to suspend the release of their survivor pensions.

He said the investigations were necessary because the pension fund spends about P3 billion a year to pay the survivors' claims.



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Christian group asks voters to turn to Bible for guidance

By Emman Cena

WHO SHOULD PEOPLE vote for in the coming May elections?

Filipino voters may want to turn to the Bible to help them choose their officials in the coming local and national elections, a Christian organization said.

The Philippine Bible Society, a nonstock nonprofit organization founded in 1899 whose aim is to make the Holy Scripture available to the public, has come up with a selection that would be an invaluable guide in selecting worthy national and local leaders.

On Tuesday, a Catholic organization, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), released its own set of criteria packaged as the "10 Commandments for Responsible Voting." Unlike the PPRCV's version, PBS criteria were all taken from numerous passages in the Bible.

10 traits

Entitled "Sino Ang Dapat Iboto sa Halalan 2007?," the tract is guided by Proverbs 29:2 which says that the state of a nation is reflective of its leaders' moral bearing.

The tract outlines 10 traits of a good leader, each of them supported by a certain passage from the Holy Scripture:

1. God-fearing (2 Samuel 23: 3-4);
2. Displays genuine concern and love for our nation (Deuteronomy 17:15);
3. Has leadership abilities (Genesis 41:37-41);
4. Manages his own family well (1 Timothy 3:4);
5. Has integrity (Deuteronomy 16:18-19);
6. Industrious (Romans 12:11);
7. Righteous (Song of Songs 89:14);
8. Generous (Proverbs 29:4);
9. True to his words (Proverbs 25:14); and
10. Impartial (Proverbs 31:8-9).

"For 107 years now, the PBS has been spreading the word of God by making the Holy Scriptures available, understandable, accessible and affordable to the people," said Nora Lucero, secretary general of PBS.

Last year, the PBS distributed some 11 million copies of the Bible nationwide hoping to reach the grassroots level and to encourage Filipinos to read the Scriptures.

Not political

The PBS campaign is not political, Lucero said. "We only want to help the Filipino voters in making their choices."

The group did not mention any name from among those who had already expressed their intention of running for office.

"We want to leave the decision to the people," she added, during the press launch of the National Bible Week, organized by the PBS.

But former Sen. Jovito Salonga, a known Bible advocate and one of the speakers, said only Comelec revamp would make the coming elections successful.

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Engineer of death

EDITORIAL

JAINAL ANTEL SALI JR., KNOWN AS ABU SULAIMAN, had 7,000 soldiers (plus American military advisers) on his tail for years. This former overseas worker (after a stint as a Moro National Liberation Front rebel, he went to Saudi Arabia where police intelligence reports say he worked in construction) had been with the Abu Sayyaf since the late 1990s, where he used his skills to deadly purpose.

The US government, which placed a $5-million reward for him, dead or alive, was after him because of the kidnappings and hostage executions he planned and participated in that were so notorious: the Jolo kidnapping of American Jeffrey Craig Schilling in 2000; the abduction from Palawan of 17 Filipinos and three American tourists in 2001, in which Guillermo Sobero was beheaded and Martin Burnham killed during rescue operations. Burnham's wife, Gracia, summed up Sali in this manner: "Based on the six months I had close contact with Solaiman during our year of captivity, I would say he was the most dangerous of the Abu Sayyaf leaders because he was filled with hate." Who can forget Sali and his group along with 17 of the hostages proceeding to the Jose Torres Memorial Hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, where they seized and detained additional hostages?

Among his catalógue of crimes was a series of department store bombings in October 2002 in Zamboanga City that killed at least a dozen civilians, an American soldier and wounded more than 200 others. And there was the 2004 SuperFerry 14 bombing and the 2005 Valentine's Day bomb attacks.

Interviewed by the Associated Press last year, Sulaiman said, "I know that being once a builder of things would make me more efficient in destroying them." He was an engineer—of death.

Sulaiman probably died with only one regret: that he didn't take many more soldiers with him. That he was hunted down and killed is a genuine achievement for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, a feather in the cap of our elite forces, a tribute to cooperation with the United States. There will be those who wish he'd been captured alive to stand trial, but many more can only be relieved that the man's trail of death and destruction has come to an end.

Sali's own passing, remarkably enough, might have passed unheralded and unnoticed. He'd actually been buried before photos from the battlefield led to the exhumation of his corpse, and the identification of his remains. It's even possible that had his death remained unrecorded, he might have been reported to have escaped, never to be seen again, with every future bombing attributed to him. This is how legends are made. Thankfully, his body was identified and a legend has been nipped in the bud. He is now, and should always be, yet another dead fanatic and mass murderer.

But 400 more Abu Sayyaf members remain at large, according to the military's own estimates. The thousands of troops who have been tracking down Sali have many more forced marches and fire fights to endure. And Mindanao must be fought over for many more weeks, months and years, if success is to be measured by picking off Abu Sayyaf bandits one by one.

Or in handfuls, such as last week's operations in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, in which troops killed seven Abu Sayyaf members, including three sub-commanders—Bandang Sali, Jundam Jamalul alias Black Killer and Abu Hubaida—and an Indonesian member of the international terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah identified only as Gufran.

Still, it is better to keep them on the run than to allow them to hide—and plot revenge.

Winners

FOREIGN COMMENT

GLOBAL WARMING HAS PRODUCED AT LEAST ONE UNDISputed economic winner: former Vice President Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth."

The celebrated film presents the scientific case and sounds a worldwide alarm about global warming. It also is the third-highest-grossing documentary film over the past 25 years.

Taking climate change seriously also seems to be yielding political dividends. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg made a splash in September when they toured a fuel cell manufacturing company in the Silicon Valley together—and then jointly announced they are fed up with Washington's failure to act, and henceforth will join together for their own initiatives on reducing greenhouse gases.

Trying to get ahead of global warming is the right thing to do as a matter of environmental policy and basic stewardship of the world ecosystem.

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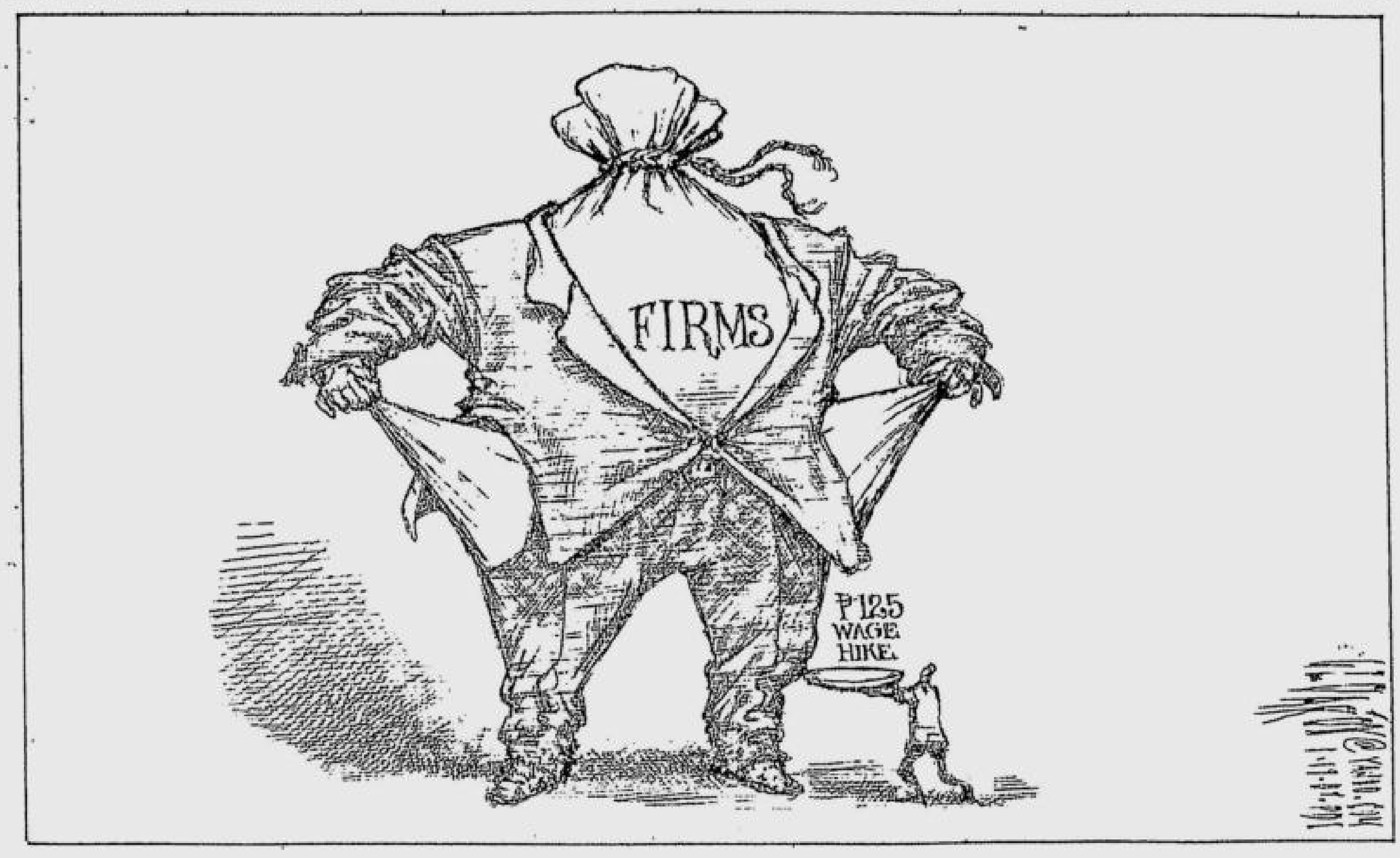


Erap spurns reconciliation

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

DON'T BET ON A RECONCILIATION BETween former President Estrada and President Macapagal-Arroyo. Malacañang has proposed the release on recognizance of the former president as a gesture of reconciliation between the administration and the opposition led by Erap. But Erap is not biting. He is laughing at the proposal.

In the first place, it is only the Sandiganbayan that can order his release, Erap said. In the second place, he doesn't trust Malacañang. (Are there still people who do?) And in the third place, they want him, in exchange, not to campaign for opposition candidates. "*Ano sila, sinuswerte?*" Erap said. " How can I not help opposition candidates?"

The ploy indicates only one thing: The administration is afraid of the drawing power of Erap who, in spite of plunder charges against him and being imprisoned in his Tanay estate for five years, remains as popular as ever. Not only that, Erap, who won the presidency with the biggest majority in the history of the Philippines, is getting even more popular, while GMA is continuing to drop in popularity, because of the growing realization by the people that Erap was given a raw deal by the Davide Supreme Court when it justified GMA's grabbing the presidency from him.

With Erap and GMA campaigning for their respective senatorial and local candidates, everybody knows, including administration people, who will win. That is why candidates are flocking to the opposition camp while even ambitious Cabinet members are shying away from being drafted in the administration senatorial ticket. They know that being associated with GMA at this time is a "kiss of death" for any politician.

Erap said that eight candidates are already sure of slots in the United Opposition (UNO) senatorial lineup, among them Loren Legarda, Ping Lacson, Manny Villar, Ralph Recto, Alan Peter Cayetano, Tito Sotto and Coco Pimentel, I think. He said his son, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito is not yet sure of getting in though his wife Sen. Loi Ejercito is retiring from politics.

The inclusion of other candidates, he said, will still be discussed by the parties composing the UNO. Among those being considered are Reps. Chiz Escudero and Noynoy Aquino or former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta. Former Sen. Gringo Honasan may not be able to campaign because he is detained and, even if he wins, he may not be allowed to take his seat. Sen. Joker Arroyo has said he is not running for reelection. Sen. Francis Pangilinan is being opposed by the FPJ camp because of his "Noted" rulings during the canvassing of votes in Congress. Former Vice President and Sen. Teofisto Guingona will help in the campaign but will not run because of his age.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in a letter to the editor that his term, contrary to what I had written in an earlier column, is not expiring this year but is good until 2010. That means that if his son Coco wins (and he has a good chance of winning), there will be two Aquilino Pimentels in the Senate. After the Loi-Jinggoy mother-and-son tandem, there will be a father-and-son tandem.

The Senate is also likely to have a brother-and-sister tandem in Alan Peter and Pia Cayetano. And if JV Ejercito finally makes it, there will also be a brother-brother tandem in JV and Jinggoy. The Senate would be full of family dynasties. Fortunately, only one candidate will be chosen from the Aquino family, or else we might have a nephew-aunt tandem, too.

Back to Erap. What he wants most is a snap election in which he and GMA would face each other in a one-on-one contest. "That would settle the legitimacy issue against her if she wins," he said. In fact, Erap is challenging GMA to do just that. "If Marcos was brave enough to do it," he said, "GMA should do it, too, and get rid of her illegitimacy baggage. Instead of the reconciliation proposal, a snap election would be a better solution."

"I won't campaign but she can," Erap dared GMA. "I will stay here in Tanay while she campaigns all over the country. Then we will see whom the people will vote for."

Erap said he would invite GMA to stay in his Tanay estate when she leaves Malacañang. "I have a horse just right for her," he said in jest. He showed us a cute little pony slightly bigger than a big dog.

Erap has not been idle during his confinement in Tanay. He has converted the 17-hectare estate into an independent and self-sustaining farm. He has a piggery (he is distributing piglets, free, to neighbors), a poultry, a vegetable garden, a big pond full of ducks, geese, swans and flamingoes, an ostrich farm and three fishponds, one each for Japanese carp, tilapia, hito and dalag. It produces everything that they consume in the estate. The only food that it doesn't produce is rice.

Every morning, workers walk the banks of the big pond to pick up duck and goose eggs. Some they eat or give away, others they hatch in an incubator. One fried ostrich egg, sunny side up, Erap said, fills one *bandehado*.

Besides his house, he has constructed a museum and library, a guest house with a deck over a big pond full of fish and waterfowl, a Wild Western-style bar, a chapel, a basketball court, a number of meditation cabanas, and a swimming pool. He even has a tomb in black marble waiting for him. His latest project is a fishing village made of bamboo and *anahaw* leaves, with an Indonesian-style meditation deck on a pond fed by streams and waterfalls.

Parties that list to the Left

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THE MILITARY IS NECESSARILY PARTISAN IN the battlefield when it fights leftists who wage armed struggle, but it must as necessarily be neutral during elections when it deals with leftists who wage parliamentary struggle. But National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales seems to wonder what to do with leftists who do both at once.

Gonzales, with the AFP spokesman concurring, would vote them out for fronting for the underground rebel movement because, one paper reported him as saying, they "manipulate the weaknesses of mainstream politics to pursue their dictatorial agenda." Then he cited the alphabet soup list of left-leaning party-list groups.

Can you say that again, Herr Secretary? "Manipulate the weaknesses of mainstream politics to pursue their dictatorial agenda," did you say? Are you sure you're not referring to Garci and his sinister Madam?

Therein lies the folly of the national security adviser's call to boycott the parliamentary Left. He accuses the Left of the same sins his government has committed.

If the problem is that these "godless commies" want to have their cake and eat it, too, what then can we say of the Palace's support for its party-list toadies—especially since party-list candidates, being elected nationwide, are potential beneficiaries of Malacañang-orchestrated *dagdag-bawas?*

Palace-anointed party-list groups have their *bibingka* and relish their *puto bumbong*, too. They flout what the Supreme Court said in its Ang Bagong Bayani decision. Speaking through then Justice Artemio Panganiban, the Court said: "[T]he party or organization must not be an adjunct of [or be] funded or assisted by, the government. By the very nature of the party-list system, the party or organization must be a group of citizens, organized by citizens and operated by citizens. It must be independent of the government." From where in the woodwork, for instance, did they find Partylist Rep. Rodante Marcoleta who filed the flawed first impeachment complaint against President Arroyo, the perfect set-up to trigger off the one-year bar and preempt her removal?

We mustn't be surprised that leftist groups have flourished in the party-list system, which was programmed from its inception to have a built-in bias for the downtrodden. The Supreme Court, again through Panganiban, noted: "It is ironic that the marginalized and underrepresented in our midst are the majority who wallow in poverty, destitution and infirmity. It was for them that the party-list system was enacted." Indeed, Panganiban would exclude party-list groups representing "business moguls and the mega-rich." "[T]he law crafted to address the peculiar disadvantages of Payatas hovel dwellers cannot be appropriated by the mansion owners of Forbes Park."

The best argument against disenfranchising the leftist party-list groups is the safety-valve rationale recognized by the Constitutional Commission when they created the party-list system. They wanted to ensure that "minority groups are not forced to resort to extra-parliamentary means to express their interest and to influence governmental policies."

But Gonzales does have a point, if you consider that the New People's Army extorts "permit-to-campaign" fees. Assuming that the NPA is but the armed component, and the party-list groups the parliamentary component, of the Communist Party of the Philippines, for certain there's got to be a conflict of interest there somewhere. How can one and the same group act as a virtual Comelec in a territory, and be a "candidate" at the same time? Will you let Garci count his own votes in the congressional race in Bukidnon?

Finally, surely there are militants who enjoy the aboveground perks of electoral politics while retaining the muscle of their underground army. But there are also leftist groups that are not allied with any rebel militia and do not have friends in high places, that is to say, in the mountains, yet they are tarred with the same brush.

The real threat to the party-list system created in the 1987 Constitution is aggressive cooptation by Malacañang. This defeats its very purpose, betrays the very reason we provided this alternative to territorial, district-based constituencies. On the other hand, if the party-list system has fallen so naturally into the embrace of leftist groups, it is not they whom we should blame. It means that it is the parliamentary Left who have effectively articulated the views of the "marginalized and underrepresented." Conversely, it is the fault of the mainstream political parties that they have failed credibly to espouse those views, that they are simply unable to obsolesce the party-list mandate.

Gonzales is wrong when he says that being leftist is basis enough to vote out party-list groups from their Batasan perch. But to his credit, he proposes to achieve this, not by charging the legal Left in court for being co-conspirators with their underground comrades, though Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez actually tried but failed, but by appealing to the voting public to speak with their ballots, and, I hope, "manipulate the [strengths] of mainstream politics to pursue their [democratic] agenda."

* * *

My alma mater, Lourdes School of Mandaluyong, holds its 2007 Alumni Homecoming at the LSM Quadrangle on Feb. 3, 2007, Saturday. The Class of '82 hosts this year's event, and invites all proud and loyal alumni back to the school where their dreams began.

Fearless forecast

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THERE ARE NO STRAWS IN THE WIND TO warrant claims of administration strategists that it would win 8 to 10 of the 12 Senate seats at stake in the May elections or of the opposition camp that its candidates would make a clean sweep of the Senate race. Charge these claims to partisan exuberance.

The outlook is unclear and muddled five months before the polls, and the outcome is likely to be found in between these two claims. If there is any credible fearless forecast that can be made at this stage, it is that no side is heading toward a clear mandate for change. There is no huge issue driving a tidal wave of public backlash that will allow an opposition sweep in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Such a result is far removed from the prevailing political reality and the balance of political forces. It is too optimistic.

The recapture by the Democrats of control of the US Congress, after 17 years in the wilderness, in the November mid-term election does not buttress any local expectation that a similarly drastic shift of power in the Philippine Congress is bound to happen. We don't have the war on Iraq as the overriding issue, and that was the lightning rod of wide American unrest. President George W. Bush's handling of the war drove American voters to shift to the Democrats.

There is no overriding issue in the country today similar to that of Iraq in the US that funnels public discontent into an issue for change of control in Congress. The Garcillano tapes case, the failed impeachment cases against President Macapagal-Arroyo last year, and the abuse in the exercise of emergency powers by the President last year while condemnable, have been exhausted and are insufficient to propel a powerful current for change, denying a fresh mandate for the President to continue to govern until 2010. Issues are not joined in the May elections. Instead they are diffused toward one titanic battle: control of the House of Representatives, a presidential bulwark in the past two years. The Senate election is not as crucial, and that's why the concentration of the administration's strategy is on the House elections and those of governors and mayors, while the Senate elections take a back seat.

Once elections are focused on the congressional seats and local officials, no galvanizing national issue pulls together the grievances against the administration, and the congressional elections become largely focused on local and district issues, in which the use of the pork barrel put the administration candidates at a great advantage over the opposition. This is not to say, opposition has no chance of wresting control of the House from the Lakas coalition, but it faces an uphill battle.

At present, the selection of the administration and opposition senatorial line-ups takes the spotlight because of the high-profile personalities involved. Both sides are struggling to form their respective tickets, but there is no one-way stampede to the opposition line-up. The emphasis of the opposition on the Senate indicates it is playing its strong cards on the Senate election and is an implicit admission of its weakness in the congressional and local races.

This difference in emphasis reflects contradicting strategies. The administration seeks to build a coalition that would ensure the retention of its House majority to block any future attempt to impeach the President. It aims to hold the line of defense in the House.

The Senate has always been a shaky ground, because historically it has been hard to manage. No president since 1987, when Congress was restored in the elections of that year, has ever tamed the Senate, although President Corazon Aquino's candidates won most of the contested seats then.

In constructing its Senate line-up, the opposition has called itself the "United Opposition," one of whose leading convenors is former President Joseph Estrada. In reality, the term "united" is a farce. It is fractured by groups and personalities who do not share a common policy or program, except their passion to deny Ms Arroyo a fresh mandate in 2007. In that sense, their common ideology is that they are anti-Arroyo, without defining in what way they oppose her. Estrada has a big axe to grind against Ms Arroyo, going back to his ouster in 2001. He wants to settle scores in 2007. The May elections are therefore a grudge fight.

An ad hoc executive committee, made up of Estrada, leaders of the Nacionalista Party, and the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon, has drawn up a list of nine candidates, it deemed to be "sure" winners. It is premature to examine the individual qualities of the candidates, until the list is released, but it should be noted that Estrada has his own preferences, and the convenors seem to have different sets of criteria for selection. Although it is reported that nine have been selected, the short list excludes Senators Joker Arroyo and Edgardo Angara, who are also being wooed by the administration. Both have outstanding records of legislation. Both are reelectionists and are not actively lobbying for inclusion in either the administration or opposition ticket.

The selection criteria of the administration are equally unclear, and the opposition does not appear to have tapped an issue that represents a strong groundswell for change in the composition of Congress. There is no focus of public anger in 2007. The most optimistic poll outcome is a marginally divided House, a recipe for politically instability.

Indie and proud of it

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

YOU STILL HAVE THIS WEEKEND, AND UP UNTIL next Wednesday, to watch "the best movies you've never seen" at the new IndieSine, a theater devoted exclusively to independent movies, the vast majority of them using digital technology, at the Robinson's Galeria Movie World.

"Isn't this a great thing?!" exclaimed my niece Coreen, who as "Monster" Jimenez, indie filmmaker, sits on the board of the Independent Filmmaker's Cooperative (IFC), the group behind "Bagong Agos," a film festival featuring "the current wave of Philippine Digital Cinema" that serves as the inaugural fare of IndieSine.

It seems easy now to define what an "indie" film is, or at least an independent Filipino film. As Paola Villaluna, also an IFC board member, writes, most indie films date back to 2005, a "watershed year" for Filipino movies when the country saw a bumper crop of films written, produced and directed by young Filipinos who saw in the new, more accessible and certainly more affordable digital technology an opportunity "to make films the way they want to, minus producers breathing down their backs, minus the cliché of casting big stars and minus the pressure of recouping a large return of investment."

But it isn't just technology or the medium used that defines the "indie spirit." As Villaluna points out, digital filmmaking merely "mirrors the independence that the previous generation saw in classic tools like the Super 8 and 16 mm."

And this is what the IFC perhaps wanted to underscore when they gave out the "First Daluyan Awards," given to "personalities whose body of work has become a constant source of influence and whose lifelong efforts in promoting, inspiring and educating filmmakers and the audience are crucial to the development of the Independent Movement."

* * *

THE AWARDEES ranged from festival organizers and filmmakers like Tikoy Aguiluz, Ed Cabagnot and Nick Deocampo, to pioneer documentary makers and indie pioneers Mario O'Hara, Rox Lee, Mike de Leon (represented by National Artist for Literature Bien Lumbera), Ben Pinga, Raymond Red, and Kidlat Tahimik and educators like Virgie Moreno and Surf Reyes.

Deocampo placed the awards in perspective when he said that in previous decades he and his colleagues were the ones honoring the early masters of the industry, while Red reminded the audience that he and his cohorts were "not yet retired" and were still making films.

Still, the indie movement, if not the film industry itself, continues to grow and mature, and the festival of indie films should provide proof of the continuing development in sensibility and content, if not technical proficiency, of young indie filmmakers.

The featured film at the opening, "Huling Balyan sa Buhi," written and directed by Sherad Anthony Sanchez, illustrates both the positive and negative aspects of indie filmmaking. Winner for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Special Jury Citation for Ensemble Acting in last year's CinemaOne Originals competition, "Huling Balyan" tells the story of the "last" *Balyan* or *Babaylan*, the indigenous term for a village shaman, of a tribe in Mindanao.

* * *

THE FILM demonstrates the freedom which indie filmmaking allows, with no need to adhere to commercial restrictions or mass market whims. The actors are all unknowns and untrained performers, and speak in Mindanao Bisaya, the dialogue interpreted through English subtitles.

There are no flashy special effects or dizzying action. Indeed, the movie proceeds at a slow, even soporific pace, lingering on scenery long after the action has been completed. But while it allots generous time for scenic views and extreme close-ups of characters pondering life, "Huling Balyan" distressingly jumps from one plot point to the next, leaving the audience to surmise about crucial events, such as the stigmata that the Balyan is supposed to have created (we're left wondering what happened to her hands which are bleeding), and the confrontation between the Balyan and a young stalker.

Riveting at some moments but confusing and confounding much of the time, "Huling Balyan" serves up a promising premise but falls over its over-burdened plot that seeks to touch on matters as varied as the communist insurgency, the need for indigenous communities to preserve their culture, the clash of modernity and tradition, even the role of women in their families and communities.

Call me simple-minded, but I think filmmakers are better off confining themselves to a single storyline or following a single character until they develop the skills of, say, Robert Altman. There's something to be said, after all, for commercial filmmaking's demands for clarity and entertainment, and discipline on the part of the auteur filmmaker.

* * *

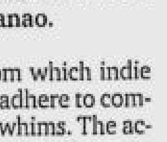
STILL, the birth of IndieSine has to be hailed as a positive development not just for the independents but for the entire film industry, including the likes of Mother Lily.

Other exhibitors, like the SM Cinemas, have begun showing indie films in theaters equipped with digital projectors. Distributors, like Star Cinema, have also begun "adopting" indie movies and promoting them like commercial blockbusters, and as in the case of "Maximo Oliveros" some have given them generous returns.

But special mention must be made of the courage and daring of Robinson's Cinemas for betting an entire theater in their biggest mall on the indie movement and the movies' continuing appeal to a wider audience. Robinson's has in the past shown admirable guts in showing movies not cut from the Hollywood template, including films made in Thailand, India and other neighboring countries. This latest move deserves both congratulations and our steady, loyal patronage.

Malcolm on lawyers and politicians

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHILE CLEANING THE BOOKS ON MY SHELVES over the weekend, I almost missed a volume bound in a dull red cloth chewed on by rodents. "American Colonial Careerist," it said on the spine, and I recognized the author, George A. Malcolm, as the same man for whom a building at the University of the Philippines in Diliman was named. Malcolm Hall houses the UP College of Law of which he wrote:

"The College of Law, University of the Philippines was organized to supply quality, not quantity leaders. All to no avail, law schools mushroomed all over the Islands. The Bar examinations became great sporting events, with candidates ready to mortgage their patrimony and sell their souls if only they could get passing grades. Yet when the six long years of study passed and the Bar examination was hurdled, no clients awaited the embryo lawyers. Droves of half-baked parasites were superimposed on an already top-heavy governmental structure and a lean economy.

"Speaking with bitter irony, there is a dearth of lawyers in the Philippines. A mere 3,000 candidates take the Bar examination. Only about 100 aspire to fill a vacant legal position. To meet this appalling crisis, the 1953 Congress encroached on the judicial field to transmute flunkers—those who had failed to pass the Bar examination conducted by the Supreme Court—into second-class lawyers. The High Tribunal nullified the retroactive features of the legislation."

After going through this, I realized Malcolm was worth reading because he served for 50 years in the Philippines and Puerto Rico and had valuable insights particularly on personalities like Rizal, Aguinaldo, Pardo de Tavera, Quezon et al. to whom he devoted a whole chapter. He also completed chapters on business and the economy, but deleted them to concentrate on law and politics, the area of his competence.

Since we face elections again this year Malcolm's remarks remain relevant 50 years later:

"Party conflicts in the Philippines center not on issues but on men. The support of the masses was given to the glamorous Quezon rather than to venerable figures of the past [Aguinaldo and Aglipay], to the glamorous Roxas rather than to a rival portrayed before the electorate as vacillating and weak, and to the glamorous Magsaysay rather than to an invalid opponent. In every instance, the voters expressed their preference for the younger more vigorous leader. In no instance were there any clear-cut issues between the contending parties, except that in the 1953 campaign, Magsaysay tried to capitalize on nasty scandals and Quirino tried to divert attention to American intervention."

Some of the clowns now in elective office are not even glamorous and would probably make Malcolm cringe, but of electoral protests he wrote:

"The Filipino people have not yet learned that acceptance of the results of an election is a key to successful self-government. Not 50 percent of the election cases should have reached the courts, but all of them had to be decided. I doubt if any member of the Supreme Court of my time really enjoyed this hard and tedious work. And naturally, judges differ in their appreciation of ballots, with one solitary ballot sometimes resolving a contest."

This column is starting to look and sound like that of Justice Isagani Cruz but one cannot help but read more and weep. Malcolm wrote about sore losers who would not even congratulate the winners in election. He wrote about those who spent more than what was stipulated by law for the campaign. He wrote about those who took from public coffers or sold their patrimony to win the election. There was so much here that made me wonder how a self-destructive people such as ourselves have survived so long.

I have only read snippets, but I will definitely read Malcolm from cover to cover over the weekend. For now, I will reproduce the closing reflections in his chapter on "Politicians and Elections" that might help those considering Charter change or change in the present form of government. Just remember these words were written half a century ago:

"...I believe it has been established that the Republic of the Philippines needs a genuine two-party system. One-party government under the Commonwealth had approached close to legalized dictatorship. A tripartite alignment under the Republic had constituted an invitation to intrigue and frustration. To keep the nation from falling apart, minority leaders should not abase principle to hop on the bandwagon of the party in power to secure some transitory advantage—a disgusting spectacle.

"Instead, through the two-party system as an agent of democracy, the majority can govern the Philippines, and the minority can provide a hard-hitting but loyal opposition.

"I feel also that the time has come when less attention should be directed to the game of politics and more attention should be concentrated on farming and business. The youth should be weaned away from academic studies to technological and other practical pursuits. The politicians themselves should also show more regard for the elemental virtues of consistency and integrity.

"Withal, it is my opinion that the Philippine electoral system, in practice, has worked better than fairly well."

(Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu)

Asean Plus

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST WEDNESDAY, I WROTE ABOUT THE NEED FOR PEOple in the region to better understand our common legacies, so we can move forward together. But Asean has remained on my mind since then and I thought there was room for one more column to push for greater awareness of Asean.

How many Filipinos are aware, for example, of Asean efforts to tackle the HIV/AIDS pandemic, or to prepare for another more deadly outbreak of SARS, or of avian flu? What about joint efforts to control Islamist terrorism? How many avail themselves of Asean university scholarships? Are we prepared for 2020, the target date for an Asean-wide policy of free movement of labor?

Expanding

We hear more about the European Union than Asean, and the gains made behind the scenes. We don't hear enough, either about the Filipinos working for Asean, including Rodolfo Severino Jr., one of the former secretaries-general of Asean.

Asean was set up in 1967 with five founding members: Thailand (which hosted the first meeting), Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines. More than anything else, the association was an anti-communist alliance, spurred largely by the United States, which had gotten embroiled in the Vietnam War, and was worried about the communist giant in the north, China. Asean's founding members themselves all had to deal with internal communist insurgencies, some of which had support from China.

Asean turns 40 this year and now has 10 members. Besides the five founding members, it now includes Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Burma (Myanmar). No longer an anti-communist alliance, Asean is perhaps the most diverse regional bloc in the world, the majority of members being liberal democracies with free market economies but the association now includes such members as its erstwhile nemesis Vietnam, still communist with a bustling free market economy, as well as Burma which is ruled by a military dictatorship.

Not only that, there's Asean Plus 3, the three being China, Japan and South Korea. I marvel at how the three countries are able to meet, during Asean summits, to discuss their own internal agenda. In effect, Asean, a kind of younger sibling, hosts a more formidable East Asian bloc of elder (big?) brothers, including still another erstwhile enemy that used to be referred to with trepidation as "Red China" or the "yellow peril."

There's more. China, Japan and South Korea are also considered dialogue partners, together with seven others: the United States (said almost incidentally), Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and the European Union. In effect, Asean has expanded its reach to much of the world and, who knows, maybe in the future it will include the African and Latin American blocs as dialogue partners.

Glocalization

Asean has matured, taking its place in "glocalization." That's a hybrid word that originally referred to the way individual countries (the "local") respond to globalization. For example, McDonald's gave rise to local imitations like Jollibee and Mang Donald's.

We could see Asean as the hub for regional glocalization. The more radical will say Asean has effectively been co-opted, transformed into a tool for capitalist globalization. I'd agree, but would argue that Asean has also created new opportunities for a glocalization process. The tensions in East Asia, for example, will have to be resolved in our part of the world, and not in Washington.

Asean Plus provides the environment for all these developments, but the extent to which individual countries benefit will still depend on each country's government and citizens.

Let me use the manufacturing sector as an example. Nationalists used to complain about how countries like the United States dump their products on developing countries, but lately what we've been seeing are "Stateside" goods stamped "Made in China" as well as the Chinese's own brand name products.

Today we're also being flooded with Asean goods, the result in part of member-countries gradually lifting import tariffs on products made by its members. Who's winning here? Asean countries that had enough foresight to develop a strong manufacturing sector that could move into the international market, starting with Southeast Asia. Check our supermarkets and our malls and you'll find, again, "Stateside" goods made in Malaysia or Indonesia, as well as homegrown products such as cheaper versions of Tupperware from Thailand, dinnerware sets and glassware from Indonesia. We're also importing an array of food products from Asean countries, from Vietnam's *nangka* (jackfruit) chips to Thai *patis* (fish sauce).

Who's losing? The countries with a weak manufacturing sector, the ones content to remain consumers and importers. Is it surprising that Filipino factories making plastics, furniture or even *patis* are closing down, unable to innovate and to compete with Asean imports? I will confess to an addiction to Vietnamese *nangka* chips, but for the life of me, I can't understand why we can't produce our own and export them, too.

Free labor

We should also be preparing ourselves for 2020, when we move into a free movement of labor within Asean. Being mainly a labor-exporting country, we could probably cash in on that new policy, but it could work the other way around as well. I can imagine, for example, that as Filipino nurses abandon the Philippines, we might actually end up having to import nurses from, say, Vietnam.

The free-movement-of-labor policy will be preceded by regional moves to standardize training and qualifications. We're already seeing other countries racing to improve their education standards, from English and Chinese language skills to high-tech science. By 2020, Filipinos might face stiff competition in the regional labor market.

Ironically, this early, our neighbors recognize that the Philippines has some of the skills and expertise they don't have so they're still sending students over to train with us, or pirating Filipino educators to teach, for example, in Singapore.

This isn't a bad thing per se; over at the University of the Philippines, for example, I have a project supported by the Rockefeller Foundation to train Southeast Asian health professionals and social scientists for research around sexuality and health issues. It brings in money to UP, but I am aware, too, that in the long run, we might see Vietnamese and Laotians overtaking us with research skills because their governments eventually take over, providing the institutional support for these scholars to conduct their own research and to train more scholars.

The people who nurtured Asean have been a pragmatic lot, modifying the organization to keep in line with changing global realities. Asean Plus has promise, but in the long run, some members will end up reaping more of these Plus benefits than others simply because they had a vision for 2020, and beyond.

Billions for war, zero for education

ANOTHER P10 BILLION FOR war, but zilch for education. I cannot help but be dismayed upon learning that President Macapagal-Arroyo has once again "fattened" the military budget with an additional P10 billion for the so-called AFP Modernization Fund.

I find it insensitive for the government to flaunt that it has P10 billion to spare for war when, with every passing year, education is becoming more and more inaccessible to our youth.

Last December, the UP board of regents (BOR) approved a 300-percent increase in tuition, in effect, jacking tuition costs from P300 to P1,000 per unit in the next academic year. This would mean that a significant number of new Upcat (UP College Admission Test) passers can just forget about their dreams of entering the university. UP, the country's premier state university, has ironically joined the ranks of private learning institutions in terms of tuition costs. UP BOR's apologists and defenders argue that through the years, UP students have become richer, that a tuition increase has long been in the offing, that the "majority" of UP students are well-to-do and can afford to pay P1,000 per unit. Though still a cause for considerable debate, the main point lies in the fact that the government refuses to increase state subsidy for education when it can afford to spend lavishly on war. Yearly budget cuts in education have taken its toll, leaving UP with no choice but to resort to income-generating schemes and tuition hikes. As a representative of the UP studentry, while I fault the UP BOR for refusing to heed the students' opposition to tuition increase, I hold the Arroyo government accountable for the rising cost of state education. This administration has proven time and again that giving the youth easy access to education is the least of its priorities.

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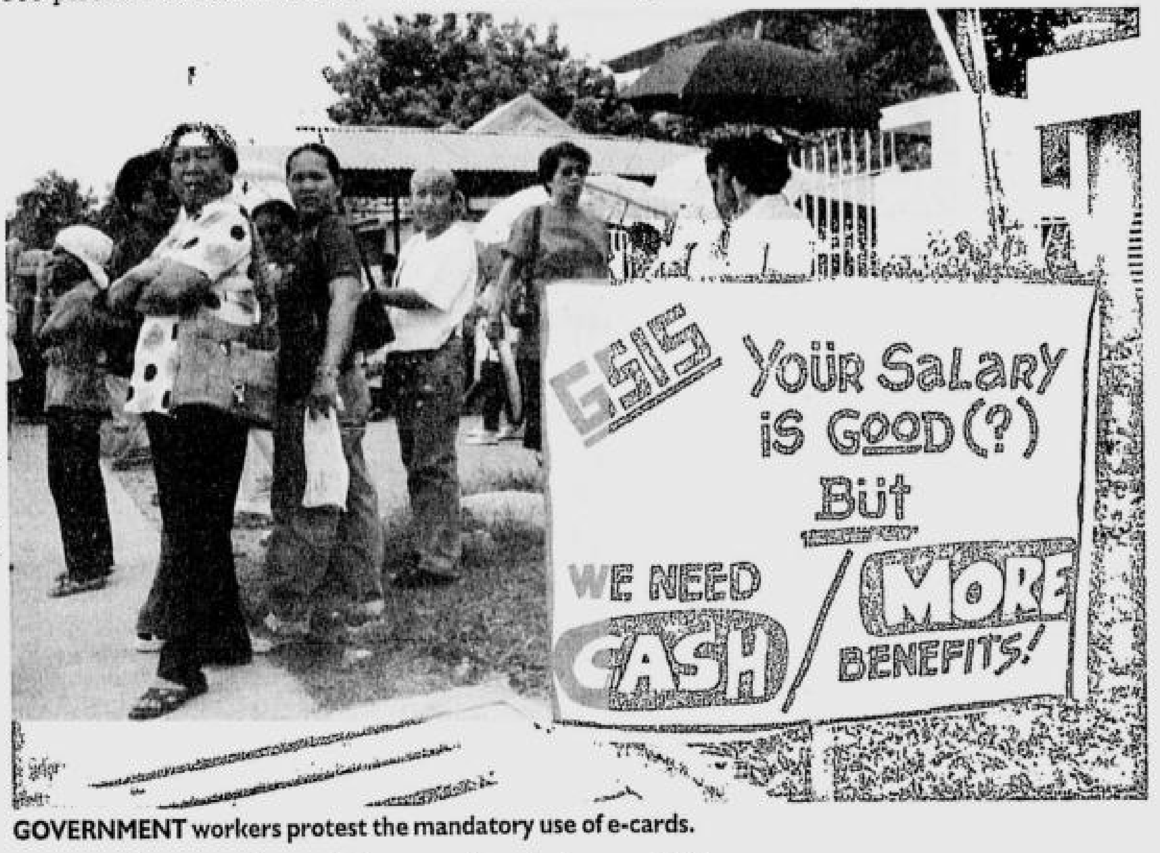

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I am not at all surprised that the retirees I talked to blame the Arroyo administration for the suffering and inconvenience this new arrangement is causing them. Indeed, how can this administration be so blind.

A visit to any GSIS office in the provinces and to a Union Bank ATM is all I'm asking of the GSIS top honcho and those who make the decisions that affect the lives of our beloved retirees.

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THIS LATEST INITIATIVE TO ADOPT INTERNET VOTING FOR absentee voters is nothing but an expensive exercise that is open to more fraud and manipulation.

Since the Philippine government assumes that Filipinos abroad are Internet-savvy enough to accept this concept, may I suggest that before the first vote is cast online we check out sites like www.electronic-vote.org to find out why e-voting and democracy don't mix.—**MIL LETTE BURGOS, Singapore (via e-mail)**

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

* * *

NOT long ago there was a story about a Filipina who had been gang-raped by 17 men in the desert of Kuwait. Where were the protests? Where was the outrage? Where were the demonstrations? Where were the screams and anguished cries of the women's groups?

You see, this has nothing to do with rape; it's about hatred. It's about hating Americans and their power.

Daniel Smith's case is just a lightning rod for such hatred. Because the crime is the rape of a Filipina, it gives validity to this hatred.

Whether or not hatred of Americans is justified, let's see it for what it really is.—**STEVEN HOPKINS, Los Angeles, California (via e-mail)**

* * *

SOME questions: Why was "Nicole" drinking so heavily with the US military personnel until very late at night? How much did the mother of "Nicole" have to do with the way the case developed?—**BOB HOGAN, Davao City (via e-mail)**

* * *

THIS is with regard to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's "grilling" of retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide on the latter's appointment as permanent representative to the United Nations. I have the impression that the senator is not being objective in the performance of his duties. As a public servant doing his duty, Estrada should be objective and put emotions aside. *Dapat ba maging senador ang ganyang tao* who cannot handle himself in the proper perspective?

Personally, I believe in Davide's capabilities, dignity and reputation.—**CYREL QUITORIANO, Ontario, Canada (via e-mail)**

Rizal inspires by the way he lived

A READER APPEALED "TO EVERYone to stop making Rizal a god and make him human again." (PDI, 1/7/07)

Yes, of course, the humanness of both Rizal and Jesus is of great pertinence to us human beings. Jesus, who is God, is described by St. Paul (in Phil 2) in the greatness of His humanity without exalting Himself. Rizal, who is human, lived his humanity in an inspiring way (motivating some people to unduly exalt him).

Indeed, Rizal is a hero who inspires us by the exemplary human way he lived his intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional life. On the one hand, Jesus inspires us, not so much by His miracles, as by His entering into the human world and "going about doing good," in the dusty, sweaty world where He cared so very much for the people around him.

In days gone by, hagiographers presented "lives of the saints" as people without guile—who walked around on earth with premature halos. Now we know that even the revered Saint Padre Pio "had a temper."

The point here, I think, is that Rizal, precisely because he was so fully human, and did such an extraordinary job of being an outstanding human being, inspires us.

For that reason, he should be not only in the minds and memories of students forced to learn about his great ideals and accomplishments, but also in the minds and memories of all Filipinos. Oh what a great nation this would be if all were to follow the principles (of honesty and integrity, for example) of Rizal. He is the Rizal who had a one-night stand in Germany. He is the same Rizal who gave himself tirelessly to build a better world for the people of Dapitan during his four-year exile there, even designing an engineering marvel for the water supply of Dapitan. He not only taught his students "integrity," he lived it.

I have read and re-read all the biographies of Rizal and many of his writings. (Even the exhortation to the women of Malolos would be enough to show his mighty mind.) I have always said that he deserves to be our national hero for his life and teachings—even if his death as a martyr for our country had not occurred. I'm really not ashamed to boast that Jose Rizal is my idol.

—**FR. RICHARD R. MICKLEY,**
O.S.Ae., Ph.D.
saintaelred@gmail.com,
The Order of St. Aelred,
St. Aelred Friendship Society,
53-A Mapang-akit Street,
Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City,
1100 Metro Manila, Philippines

Stakes in Subic rape case

COMMENTARY

Leticia R. Shahani

WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE SUBIC rape case is not only respecting our international obligations. It is also about protecting the rights of citizens from unequal treaties.

When "Nicole" filed a case against four American servicemen in 2005, the Executive Branch in its public pronouncements was already biased in favor of upholding the Visiting Forces Agreement. It had not seen it fit to defend a Filipina against sexual violence. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo declared at the outset that the outcome of the case would not affect RP-US relations, implying prematurely that a simple rape case would not affect the august protocol between the State Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The talkative Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has always referred to women's groups defending Nicole as the "mob" or "leftists" or "progressives." Even the spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines conceded that military aid was a priority and that the AFP did not see national sovereignty challenged.

Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno, in his press conference explaining why Smith was transferred at night to the US Embassy, said he wanted to avoid the "ek-ek" (his own words) of protest groups. The smiling double-talk on TV of Secretaries Ignacio Bunye and Eduardo Ermita and Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus in explaining the government position demonstrated the obsequiousness of Filipino officials before Americans in the name of national security as well as the depth of their ignorance of rape as a "heinous crime."

Those in the Executive Branch do not seem to regard the feminist movement as a force in Filipino civil society, so eager are they to please President George W. Bush and Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney. But they must be careful about underestimating the women's movement. The rape issue has become a battle cry among Filipino women of all classes. It is Nicole now, but in the future it could be a daughter, sister or mother who can be raped with impunity.

It is instructive to analyze the presence of the contending parties at the hearings in the Makati regional trial court which I attended fairly regularly. American officials would nearly always fill up two thirds of the public section in the court room. Whatever you might say about the Americans, they know how to defend their interests and look after their kind. The public prosecutors from the Department of Justice and the private counsel of Nicole were there. But the presence of the Executive Branch was minimal. The only Filipinos who attended regularly were members of women's groups and media. Executive officials appeared only sporadically, and even DFA officials were rarely seen at the hearings. Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes of the VFA Office (who has since resigned was more regular in attendance. Very obvious by its absence was the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which is designated by law to be the "lead agency" in the establishment of rape crisis centers.

Certainly, the trial could have been a learning experience for the Executive Branch to understand the plight of Filipino victims of sexual violence in an international context. But the US was its main concern.

Forgotten in the legal battle is the domestic legislation which enabled Judge Benjamin Pozon to find Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith guilty "beyond reasonable doubt" of the crime of rape. I am bringing this up not because I was the author and sponsor in the Senate of RA 8353 which redefined rape as a "crime against persons" and no longer as a "crime against chastity" and RA 8505 which provided assistance and protection for rape victims in the litigation of their cases and their recovery. In the same way that we have to abide by our international commitments, we must also implement affirmative action embodied in our laws which defend the rights of our citizens.

The two bills which I filed in the Senate took nine long years of struggle against entrenched opposition, lengthy hearings and negotiations before they became law. The Philippines is one of the few countries which has solid legislation on rape. Let us not trivialize these laws in the face of the VFA; Filipino women should not be given short shrift because of an unbalanced power relationship.

Let us hope that the Supreme Court will bear in mind the giant steps which our nation has taken to defend human rights in international law. The Senate in 1989 ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 2003 it ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Both protocols recognize the competence of specific UN committees to consider, after all national remedies have been exhausted, communications from individuals, under the jurisdiction of a state party to the protocols, who claim to be victims of violation by that state of any of the rights set forth in the covenant or convention, both of which have been ratified by our Senate. Thus, a Filipino can seek recourse at the United Nations should his/her human rights be found to have been violated under the provisions of treaties entered into by the Government.

Leticia Ramos Shahani is a former senator and a retired diplomat.

(Please send your comments to LRShahani@yahoo.com)

Doubtless the most hospitable people

I CANNOT HELP BUT BE AMUSED BY THE turn of events in the rape case involving Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith of the US Marines and three of his comrades-in-arms. Well, the events clearly displayed the Filipinos' vaunted hospitality—it could extend even to our adversaries (who are guests, all right).

We are the only nation in this world whose appellate court would consider the comfort of the accused (visiting foreign nationals) of more importance than the welfare of the host (an unsuspecting victim who gets abused). And so, goodbye, Makati City Jail! Hello, US Embassy!

We are the only nation whose justice secretary believes in the innocence of the American guests over the contentions of a Filipina victim (despite concrete proofs of the visitor's guilt). Naturally, we don't offend our visitors, even if they have been convicted of a crime here, more so, when they're American visitors.

We are the only nation whose government does not want its guest-prisoner to experience the hassles of traffic, such that he had to be whisked off his cell in the dead of night.

We are the only nation whose officials would not want to displease the visiting forces lest they back out from the regularly scheduled joint war exercises and withhold the donations they have pledged.

And so in the end, we, Filipinos, are the ones criticizing and disagreeing with each other while our guest-prisoner enjoys our hospitality.

—**SHEILA MARIE LOPEZ,**
sheilalopez_07@yahoo.com

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Since the Philippine government assumes that Filipinos abroad are Internet-savvy enough to accept this concept, may I suggest that before the first vote is cast online we check out sites like www.electronic-vote.org to find out why e-voting and democracy don't mix.—MIL LETTE BURGOS, Singapore (via e-mail)

* * *

NOT long ago there was a story about a Filipina who had been gang-raped by 17 men in the desert of Kuwait. Where were the protests? Where was the outrage? Where were the demonstrations? Where were the screams and anguished cries of the women's groups?

You see, this has nothing to do with rape; it's about hatred. It's about hating Americans and their power.

Daniel Smith's case is just a lightning rod for such hatred. Because the crime is the rape of a Filipina, it gives validity to this hatred.

Whether or not hatred of Americans is justified, let's see it for what it really is.—STEVEN HOPKINS, Los Angeles, California (via e-mail)

* * *

SOME questions: Why was "Nicole" drinking so heavily with the US military personnel until very late at night? How much did the mother of "Nicole" have to do with the way the case developed?—BOB HOGAN, Davao City (via e-mail)

* * *

THIS is with regard to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's "grilling" of retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide on the latter's appointment as permanent representative to the United Nations. I have the impression that the senator is not being objective in the performance of his duties. As a public servant doing his duty, Estrada should be objective and put emotions aside. *Dapat ba maging senador ang ganyang tao* who cannot handle himself in the proper perspective?

Personally, I believe in Davide's capabilities, dignity and reputation.—CYREL QUITORIANO, Ontario, Canada (via e-mail)

Rizal inspires by the way he lived

A READER APPEALED "TO EVERYone to stop making Rizal a god and make him human again." (PDI, 1/7/07)

Yes, of course, the humanness of both Rizal and Jesus is of great pertinence to us human beings. Jesus, who is God, is described by St. Paul (in Phil 2) in the greatness of His humanity without exalting Himself. Rizal, who is human, lived his humanity in an inspiring way (motivating some people to unduly exalt him).

Indeed, Rizal is a hero who inspires us by the exemplary human way he lived his intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional life. On the one hand, Jesus inspires us, not so much by His miracles, as by His entering into the human world and "going about doing good," in the dusty, sweaty world where He cared so very much for the people around him.

In days gone by, hagiographers presented "lives of the saints" as people without guile—who walked around on earth with premature halos. Now we know that even the revered Saint Padre Pio "had a temper."

The point here, I think, is that Rizal, precisely because he was so fully human, and did such an extraordinary job of being an outstanding human being, inspires us.

For that reason, he should be not only in the minds and memories of students forced to learn about his great ideals and accomplishments, but also in the minds and memories of all Filipinos. Oh what a great nation this would be if all were to follow the principles (of honesty and integrity, for example) of Rizal. He is the Rizal who had a one-night stand in Germany. He is the same Rizal who gave himself tirelessly to build a better world for the people of Dapitan during his four-year exile there, even designing an engineering marvel for the water supply of Dapitan. He not only taught his students "integrity," he lived it.

I have read and re-read all the biographies of Rizal and many of his writings. (Even the exhortation to the women of Malolos would be enough to show his mighty mind.) I have always said that he deserves to be our national hero for his life and teachings—even if his death as a martyr for our country had not occurred. I'm really not ashamed to boast that Jose Rizal is my idol.

—FR. RICHARD R. MICKLEY,
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Stakes in Subic rape case

COMMENTARY

Leticia R. Shahani

WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE SUBIC rape case is not only respecting our international obligations. It is also about protecting the rights of citizens from unequal treaties.

When "Nicole" filed a case against four American servicemen in 2005, the Executive Branch in its public pronouncements was already biased in favor of upholding the Visiting Forces Agreement. It had not seen it fit to defend a Filipina against sexual violence. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo declared at the outset that the outcome of the case would not affect RP-US relations, implying prematurely that a simple rape case would not affect the august protocol between the State Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The talkative Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has always referred to women's groups defending Nicole as the "mob" or "leftists" or "progressives." Even the spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines conceded that military aid was a priority and that the AFP did not see national sovereignty challenged.

Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno, in his press conference explaining why Smith was transferred at night to the US Embassy, said he wanted to avoid the "ek-ek" (his own words) of protest groups. The smiling double-talk on TV of Secretaries Ignacio Bunye and Eduardo Ermita and Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus in explaining the government position demonstrated the obsequiousness of Filipino officials before Americans in the name of national security as well as the depth of their ignorance of rape as a "heinous crime."

Those in the Executive Branch do not seem to regard the feminist movement as a force in Filipino civil society, so eager are they to please President George W. Bush and Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney. But they must be careful about underestimating the women's movement. The rape issue has become a battle cry among Filipino women of all classes. It is Nicole now, but in the future it could be a daughter, sister or mother who can be raped with impunity.

It is instructive to analyze the presence of the contending parties at the hearings in the Makati regional trial court which I attended fairly regularly. American officials would nearly always fill up two thirds of the public section in the court room. Whatever you might say about the Americans, they know how to defend their interests and look after their kind. The public prosecutors from the Department of Justice and the private counsel of Nicole were there. But the presence of the Executive Branch was minimal. The only Filipinos who attended regularly were members of women's groups and media. Executive officials appeared only sporadically, and even DFA officials were rarely seen at the hearings. Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes of the VFA Office (who has since resigned was more regular in attendance. Very obvious by its absence was the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which is designated by law to be the "lead agency" in the establishment of rape crisis centers.

Certainly, the trial could have been a learning experience for the Executive Branch to understand the plight of Filipino victims of sexual violence in an international context. But the US was its main concern.

Forgotten in the legal battle is the domestic legislation which enabled Judge Benjamin Pozon to find Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith guilty "beyond reasonable doubt" of the crime of rape. I am bringing this up not because I was the author and sponsor in the Senate of RA 8353 which redefined rape as a "crime against persons" and no longer as a "crime against chastity" and RA 8505 which provided assistance and protection for rape victims in the litigation of their cases and their recovery. In the same way that we have to abide by our international commitments, we must also implement affirmative action embodied in our laws which defend the rights of our citizens.

The two bills which I filed in the Senate took nine long years of struggle against entrenched opposition, lengthy hearings and negotiations before they became law. The Philippines is one of the few countries which has solid legislation on rape. Let us not trivialize these laws in the face of the VFA; Filipino women should not be given short shrift because of an unbalanced power relationship.

Let us hope that the Supreme Court will bear in mind the giant steps which our nation has taken to defend human rights in international law. The Senate in 1989 ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 2003 it ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Both protocols recognize the competence of specific UN committees to consider, after all national remedies have been exhausted, communications from individuals, under the jurisdiction of a state party to the protocols, who claim to be victims of violation by that state of any of the rights set forth in the covenant or convention, both of which have been ratified by our Senate. Thus, a Filipino can seek recourse at the United Nations should his/her human rights be found to have been violated under the provisions of treaties entered into by the Government.

Leticia Ramos Shahani is a former senator and a retired diplomat.

(Please send your comments to LRShahani@yahoo.com)

Doubtless the most hospitable people

I CANNOT HELP BUT BE AMUSED BY THE turn of events in the rape case involving Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith of the US Marines and three of his comrades-in-arms. Well, the events clearly displayed the Filipinos' vaunted hospitality—it could extend even to our adversaries (who are guests, all right).

We are the only nation in this world whose appellate court would consider the comfort of the accused (visiting foreign nationals) of more importance than the welfare of the host (an unsuspecting victim who gets abused). And so, goodbye, Makati City Jail! Hello, US Embassy!

We are the only nation whose justice secretary believes in the innocence of the American guests over the contentions of a Filipina victim (despite concrete proofs of the visitor's guilt). Naturally, we don't offend our visitors, even if they have been convicted of a crime here, more so, when they're American visitors.

We are the only nation whose government does not want its guest-prisoner to experience the hassles of traffic, such that he had to be whisked off his cell in the dead of night.

We are the only nation whose officials would not want to displease the visiting forces lest they back out from the regularly scheduled joint war exercises and withhold the donations they have pledged.

And so in the end, we, Filipinos, are the ones criticizing and disagreeing with each other while our guest-prisoner enjoys our hospitality.

—SHEILA MARIE LOPEZ,
sheilalopez_07@yahoo.com

GMA set on finishing off terrorists with 'hand of steel'

From page A1

bers of the extremist group and the recovery of a number of firearms, Caculitan said.

The identities of the slain Marines were not divulged.

Maj. Eugene Batara, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command based in Zamboanga City, said the soldiers' bodies would be flown to their families after military rites at the Westmincom.

'Very wonderful year'

Earlier yesterday, Ms Arroyo was at the Department of National Defense headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, where she and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney personally congratulated the military brass for the killing on Tuesday of Sulaiman, who was behind high-profile kidnappings and deadly bomb attacks in Mindanao.

"I think 2007 is going to be a very wonderful year here in the Philippines," Kenney told reporters, adding:

"It's going to be the year that the Philippines not only hosts a terrific summit [of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations] and takes the leadership role in the region but also makes great strides in the war on terrorism and in bringing peace and prosperity to the people of the Philippines.

"And that's good for the United States, too. Not only do our troops benefit from working with the Armed Forces of the Philippines but our people also benefit from a prosperous, safe Philippines, which is a great place for my countrymen to visit, and a great place to do business. It's good for everyone."

Said Ms Arroyo: "I commend the [AFP] for another milestone in the campaign against terror, which caps with glory the signing of the Asean Convention on Counter-Terrorism. We are resolved to work with our strategic allies in the region and with the United States to tighten the dragnet and stop the movement of terrorists, their finances and their deadly material across the seas and borders."

According to Caculitan, troops belonging to the 9th Marine Battalion's Special Operations Platoon led by 2Lt. Alex Toledo encountered a group of about 60 Abu Sayyaf members in Patikul at around noon yesterday.

Radullan Sahiron

The men were believed to be part of the forces under senior Abu Sayyaf commander Radullan Sahiron (also known as Kumander Putol), Dr. Abu Pula and Tandah Sahibul, who are all on the wanted list of terrorists.

"This is part of our commitment to destroy the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu," Caculitan said.

"It would be another major blow to the Abu Sayyaf if indeed Sahiron was among the 10 Abu Sayyaf members killed," said Batara.

The latest casualties brought to 11 the total number of Marines killed in Sulu since the military renewed its pursuit operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

Last Sept. 4, six Marines were killed and 19 were seriously wounded when a Marine platoon chanced upon a major Abu Sayyaf hideout in Barangay Tugas in Patikul.

Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani was believed mortally wounded in that three-hour gun battle.

Forensic investigators are conducting tests in the United States to determine if the remains dug up by Marines in Patikul last Dec. 27 were those of Janjalani.

In a string of encounters in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi in the last couple of weeks, Army and Marine troops have killed four Abu Sayyaf commanders led by Sulaiman, three key aides and an Indonesian believed to be a member of the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

'Tremendous fighting force'

The President was quoted as saying during the closed-door command conference at the DND that the troops in Sulu "should make all of us proud."

"They are a tremendous fighting force and they [have done] extraordinary things in capturing some of the world's most deadly terrorists. Our strongest congratulations to the brave men and women of the [AFP] who fight under tremendous leadership," she said.

She also said the killing of Abu Sayyaf leaders had shown that "the relentless pressure we have applied in the field is taking its toll."

"And we will keep it up until all the terrorists and their clandestine cells are accounted for," Ms Arroyo said, adding:

"We mark every high point in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and JI with greater resolve to move forward in strengthening domestic, regional and global security. The Philippines has a stake in a safer world where 8 million Filipinos work and reside, and in an East Asian region that builds shared prosperity on stability and peace."

Military officials briefed the President and Ambassador Kenney on the continued operations against the Abu Sayyaf, and also listed the AFP's logistical requirements to sustain its counterterrorism operations.

RP-US training

AFP Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon said he expected the Abu Sayyaf to launch retaliatory action but added that his soldiers were prepared for this.

Esperon attributed part of his men's success in hunting down terrorists to constant training and use of the latest military equipment, especially during the RP-US Balikatan war games.

Kenney said Philippine and US soldiers had been able to share information and train together, helping the former to ferret out extremists in "really tough terrain—mountainous, forested—in operations conducted at night in a driving rainstorm."

"As General Esperon said, the efforts in Jolo are the result of the extraordinary training on the part of the Philippine troops, and I'm very proud that American forces have been here training with, learning from, sharing ideas with, advising, assisting [them]. It's a tremendous partnership, but I do want to emphasize that an international terrorist was killed thanks to the talent of Philippine troops," the ambassador said.

Abu Sulaiman was killed on Tuesday by elite Army troops during an encounter on Bud Daho in Talipao, Sulu. But it was not until Wednesday that the announcement was made, after his identity was ascertained with the help of civilian witnesses.

The US government had put up a $5-million reward for the capture of Sulaiman, whose real name was Jainal Antel Sali.

On the $5-million bounty, Kenney said the matter could "take a little bit longer to sort out" because it was "a little bit complicated."

Cities as victims

At the mayors' convention, Ms Arroyo said Philippine cities had also been victims of "terroristic activity."

"And I call on the city mayors: Let us all be determined to usher in a durable peace through economic development, interfaith dialogue and international cooperation," she said.

The President acknowledged the presence at the convention of General Santos Mayor Jun Achalon, whose city, she said, had become the victim of the latest bomb attacks.

The AFP said it believed that the Abu Sayyaf was behind the two explosions that rocked General Santos last week, or days before the Philippines hosted the 12th Asean summit and East Asian summit in Cebu City.

"I hope, Jun, that with the killing of the top Abu Sayyaf leader and with the continued support of the United States that they have reiterated to us today, we will be able to put an end to the violence not only in Sulu, which has become very peaceful, but also in the great cities like General Santos," Ms Arroyo said. *With reports from Inquirer Mindanao and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila*

Rafael has problems Thomas . . .

From page A1

instead exercises in extreme concentration.

Rafael—not his real name—is one of 49 students currently enrolled in Worldlab School Inc., the country's sole nonstock, nonprofit school with an academic curriculum designed specifically to help children afflicted with dyslexia.

Language-based disorder

Dyslexia is defined as a language-based neurological disorder affecting the ability of children and adults to read, spell and write.

Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Whoopi Goldberg, Tom Cruise and Thomas Edison, among many hugely famous people, went through the problem and overcame it.

The learning disability is genetic in origin and equally affects boys and girls. And like most genetic disabilities, there is no cure.

Because of faulty wiring in their brains, the letter "b" becomes a "d," "p" becomes a "q" or "j" becomes an "l," and words like "dog" becomes "god" or even "odg," "saw" becomes "was," "wasp" or "gsaw."

Letters are jumbled in their brains, sometimes they omit letters that should be there and add letters that shouldn't, transpose or invert letters.

Reading fine print is even more of a challenge.

Words are incomprehensible with the letters appearing like a giant gray mass. Letters seem to swim all over the page, they sometimes don't know where one word begins or ends, and some have even described the letters as growing hairs or bumps.

The same problem applies with numbers, labels, signs and symbols.

Poor spellers

Thus to the untrained eye, dyslexics who are of normal, even above average, intelligence are labeled as slow or stupid because of their poor spelling, untidy writing and morbid fear of reading in front of the class.

It is frustrating for them because they can easily grasp their lessons as long as no reading is involved.

Ask them to recite, and they'll have no problem answering. It's when they start putting their thoughts on paper that their problem surfaces.

They are often teased by their fellow students because of their atrocious spelling during the early years of their education, resulting in low self-esteem and lack of confidence that they unfortunately carry to their adulthood, unless they learn to cope and recognize their learning disability.

And they can cope with the help of the right teaching techniques, and these are what Worldlab offers its students, says Faye Casis, school director of Worldlab, a small school in a converted old house at No. 28, 7th St. New Manila, Quezon City.

Never too late

The International Dyslexia Association says "it is never too late for individuals with dyslexia to learn reading, processing and expressing information more efficiently."

"With proper diagnosis, appropriate instruction, hard work and support from family, teachers, friends and others, individuals who are dyslexic can succeed in school and later as working adults," it adds.

Worldlab has been teaching dyslexics for some 20 years. It was started by a group of friends who saw the lack of proper facilities to help children with dyslexia.

Because they were reading teachers and psychologists, they devised their own techniques. They started in a clinic in Makati and later expanded into a school in Quezon City.

Worldlab is a full grade school, offering instruction from grades 1 to 7 with the same subjects as other schools, such as science, math and social studies.

But it does have decoding and spelling classes that are not available in other schools and it offers one-on-one reading and spelling tutorials for students who have moved on to high school who still need help with their studies.

Limited class size

Because of the close supervision required to help the students, class size is limited. Some have three students, and the biggest has only 12. The tuition fee is steep, and almost all of it goes to the teachers, who have a specialized skill set.

Casis proudly says that almost all of its graduates go on to regular high schools, and some have even graduated with degrees in engineering and literature from top colleges.

Teacher Sherlyn May Hamak tells the INQUIRER that the children just have to be taught to read differently so they can grasp concepts of words and letters.

Instead of just showing them letters, they should "feel" how letters are written by guiding their hand through the loops, lines and whirls that make up the individual letters of the alphabet and recognize their sound.

They are taught to use their fingers when they read to help them concentrate.

One child even says putting her finger on the page helps pin the letters down and keep them from "swimming."

To further help them along in their studies, Worldlab produces its own learning materials. The passages are triple-spaced and in large font sizes to make it easier for the students to read. Pictures are used liberally to bring lessons home.

Early intervention

Teacher Elizabeth Legronio says these techniques work best when they get the students as early as possible because then they will not be saddled with a heavy emotional burden from teasing or lack of self-esteem.

This makes it easier for them to learn because there is no resistance to the teaching methods that are certainly different from those used in "regular" schools.

Then there's the support of the parents and siblings, which is crucial in the children's learning process.

"No matter how good the program is, if the parents and family members are not there to provide encouragement and support, then they will not learn and reach their full potential," says teacher Reina Macalinao-Pante.

Potential for greatness

And these special students do have the potential to be great.

While they have problems in reading, they more than make up for it in their creativity and social skills.

Combine these with their ability to read and write, the students will grow up to become productive members of society.

As Rafael says, because of the encouragement from his teachers and friends, his dream of becoming a lawyer no longer seems so far-fetched.

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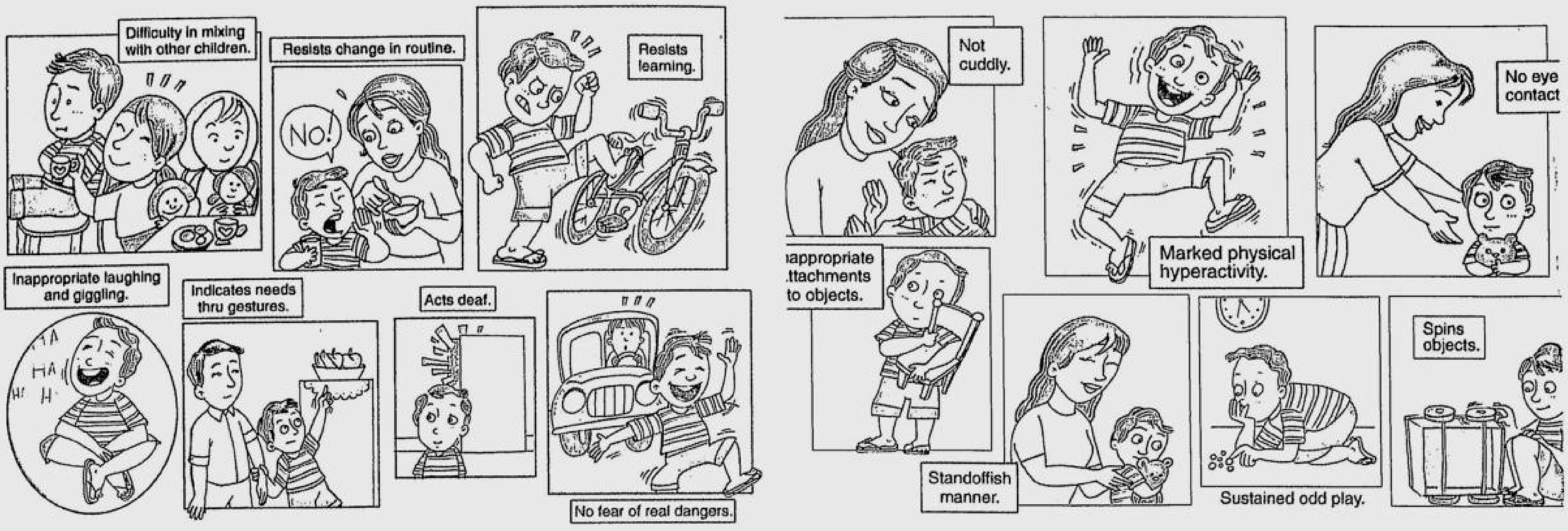
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Resists change in routine.
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Resists learning.
Not cuddly.
Marked physical hyperactivity.
No eye contact
Inappropriate laughing and giggling.
HA HA H H
Indicates needs thru gestures.
Acts deaf.
No fear of real dangers.
appropriate ttachments to objects.
Standoffish manner.
Sustained odd play.
Spins objects.

TELLTALE SIGNS ILLUSTRATED BY STEPH BRAVO

The Autism Society of the Philippines has identified behavioral signs and symptoms that can aid a physician or a household in determining if a child is having development problems or signs of autism.

My daughter Mikki: There are small miracles

From page A1

she becomes aware of this and she hurts herself, I am incensed.

Mikki is my daughter.

Unkind attention

Coming home in May 2005 after living for 14 years in Switzerland, I am disconcerted at the unkind attention, most of the time anyway, that she gets when she goes out.

Back in Europe, people just left her alone, apparently aware of her condition.

On the tram I used to take going to work in Geneva in the mornings, there was always a teenager in the same situation as Mikki's. He hopped on midway between my Rue des Battoirs home and my office across from the Palais des Nations. He got off at the Gare de Cornavin to work at some place, I was told.

Swiss are plugged in

The teenager usually put on earphones from his disk player, then would begin to rock back and forth. Sometimes, he spouted gibberish. Nobody paid attention to him, or to kids afflicted with Down Syndrome kissing on the bus, or to a blind man feeling his way on the street using a stick. They were treated like normal people, but were lent a hand when they needed it. They did not eyeball them.

Not here in Manila. And it is sad. One never knows when the disorder would show up in the family, God forbid. Early recognition of the disability is a key to its treatment.

Mikki was born a normal baby, but something happened to her after she was stricken with typhoid fever and was hospitalized. She was never the same again. Her development wasn't the same as my three other children.

She went through a battery of tests. We were told she suffered from autism, from the Greek word "autos," meaning "self."

Not 'Rain Man'

The cause of this disorder is mostly in the realm of speculation, although much study has been made on it. Each person afflicted with autism is unique.

No, my kid is not like Dustin Hoffman in the hit movie "Rain Man." He's what is called an "autistic savant." She is nonverbal.

We had to take her at age 3 to what was recommended to us as a very good child psychiatrist just back from a fellowship in the United States.

I took Mikki regularly to this expert at St. Luke's Hospital. There, she was closeted for 30 minutes—thrice a week. What arcane things were done to my daughter, I never knew.

Mikki never showed signs of improvement.

One day, we saw the good doctor on a TV talk show, where she was introduced as the country's leading sex therapist.

When I was offered a job by my former foreign editor in the Washington-based United Press International, I agonized if I should give up the only thing I enjoyed doing and work in Geneva.

I decided that maybe there was hope for Mikki in Switzerland. So, I packed my bags and my family and there we went. The country has all the best facilities money can buy. Access to them can be very expensive, more than what I earned in a year.

WINTERS IN SWITZERLAND: Mikki goes to a ski resort at Crans Montana.

Institutions heavily funded

So I had to settle for public institutions that were heavily subsidized—the first at I'Esperance (Hope) tucked in the rolling vineyards of Etoy, (pronounced eth-wah), about 40 kilometers north of Geneva, where interaction among children suffering from various disorders was essentially the objective. It was very depressing for me.

In a later school in Geneva, Mikki learned how to use spoon and fork, to brush her teeth, small tender mercies for which we were eternally grateful to her teachers.

During winters, she went to a ski resort. Summers were spent horseback riding, visits to parks, shops and restaurants. She did all the sundry activities normal children spend time with during the seasons.

Going outdoors is part of the treatment of autistic children.

In Manila, I hear of handicapped kids being cooped up at home, some in nothing more than a golden cage, like one in the Antipolo hills, where scions of rich families are kept and where caregivers attend to their needs 24 hours a day. Worse, there are horror stories of children being beaten up by parents who feel shamed by the aberration.

Mikki is a source of pride and joy. I am proud of her, as I am of my three other children, all working professionals abroad.

She waits for me most nights, lying in bed. I give her a kiss, or she pushes me off and gives me a high five instead, or she asks me to kiss the sole of her foot while raising it. I tuck her in, lie down beside her, until she falls asleep.

Disturbance

Some nights, she wakes up and blabbers at the top of her voice. It was something I had always feared in Geneva. There, a municipal edict penalizes anyone making disturbing noise between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. with a fine of 500 Swiss francs (about P20,000) or imprisonment up to 90 days. I never had any complaints from my Swiss neighbors.

I get back here. One elderly man in the next house already has lodged a complaint with our barangay captain, saying my daughter was disturbing his siesta. Weird!

Today, Mikki attends a special school, to allow her to socialize. Our objective is to get her to become at least independent, to be able to attend to her basic needs without help. It is a slow and painful process. There have been some small miracles.

Otherwise, when not in school, she spends most of her time at home, listening to music, and dancing to her heart's content.

'I shall never let go of my little sister'

From page A1

me as I cuddle her, she breaks into laughter. I tell myself she's truly special. When she holds my hand, or when she indicates to me that she wants me to take her into my arms, I am convinced that I am one with her.

But just as easily as she opens up to me, she becomes distant, out of reach. She flaps her hands, as though they were wings, seeming to fly away from me. She moves about on tiptoe as though she were in flight.

I search her eyes and try to look inside her, but all I see is emptiness.

You see, my little sister is autistic.

Born on Jan. 28, 1985, she was a beautiful baby with black eyes and a mass of brown hair. Her name is Michelle Kay. We call her Mikki.

I remember being fetched from school and told the news. We rushed in great anticipation to the hospital. I vividly recall the thrill of holding her in my arms. She was so tender, so fragile, so lovely. I immediately fell in love with her.

It was a joy watching her grow day by day. We delighted in hearing her say a few incomprehensible words. She was our little angel.

Nightmare begins

Just when everything seemed perfect, Mikki was rushed to the hospital. She had typhoid fever. Since she was fat, the intern had difficulty finding a vein to feed her with fluids. He had to prick her in the foot, which produced screams and cries.

A week later, we took her home, thinking the worst was over. But the nightmare had just begun.

Months after her first birthday, we noticed something was terribly wrong with her. She did not want to be cuddled or carried. I insisted on embracing her, but she would cry. I could not understand why. I felt that maybe she did not like me. Mikki also fell unusually quiet most of the time.

I knew my parents were disturbed. I remember them consulting doctors. Mikki underwent a series of tests. I heard talk about chemical imbalance in her brain. Finally, they saw a child psychiatrist. My little sister was diagnosed as a classic case of autism!

Like Albert Einstein?

What is that? My mother said Mikki was locked in her own world, that she was unable to communicate.

A series of questions formed in my mind. Can Mikki be cured? Why was she autistic?

I was later told that Albert Einstein was autistic. Did that mean that my sister could be a genius? More than the questions was the difficulty I had in accepting what I was told about Mikki.

MIKKI has eye contact at age 2

It was easy to close my eyes to reality. But as Mikki grew and evidence of her abnormality showed, I had trouble dealing with it inside. I guess I did a pretty good job hiding all those thoughts. Growing up, there were parties and campus activities. Life went on. But there was a problem to deal with.

The chance came during my Days with the Lord retreat at the Immaculate Concepcion Academy. There, I had a long conversation with our chaplain, Father Leon. I told him all about my questions and all the bitterness I felt about Mikki. He told me something that changed my outlook. He said: "Why should you pity your little sister. How sure are you that she is unhappy in her world?"

He asked me to stop judging her by the standards of this life and know that my little sister is in a place where there is peace.

He also said that it took a special kind of family to care for a special baby. And he said that I should not stop hoping and trying to show Mikki that my world was safe for her too.

The new baby-sitter

I guess all those words did not mean much until the family moved to Geneva in 1991. No more house help. Being the eldest of four siblings, I became the new baby-sitter. I bathed her, fed her, slept with her. We were inseparable.

In the beginning, my temper would show, occasionally. During those times, when things became so unbearable, I would see Mikki looking at me and smiling. It would change all bad feelings inside.

Being with her all the time, I learned a lot about her, shrugged off the feeling that going out with her, all eyes were on her, and me. After some time, I felt, who cares?

So what if Mikki flaps her hands and breaks into "abadikiboo" all of a sudden? I find myself waking up at night checking on her. In school, I miss her perfumed scent.

My family went on pilgrimages to pray for Mikki. At Lourdes, in France, after seeing all those people who believe in miracles, I felt that there was hope. I refused to believe that she cannot be cured.

How can you look at a beautiful child like her and accept that she doesn't have a chance?

Prayers and fairy tales

Lately, there are signs that she has improved. Maybe our prayers are finally being heard.

Mikki runs to us and asks to be hugged. Though she cannot talk, we are able to know what she wants. But we know that her problems are not over.

My parents worry about what will happen to Mikki when they are gone. I am not worried. I know I shall never let go of my sister.

My hopes and fears are if there is a guy who will ever accept my sister wholly and love her as we all do. She will be a part of my life, and sometimes it is scary. [Ed's note: She has found her man.]

I know now that my prince need neither ride on a white horse nor live in a castle. He simply must love my sister as unconditionally as he loves me.

My brother and other sister share the same thought. We know that whatever life has in store for us, in whatever field our dreams will take us, Mikki will be at the center of it all.

I believe in dreams becoming a reality. I believe in fairy tales and magic. I believe things will work out for Mikki and me.

(Editor's note: The writer is senior marketing manager at Cisco Systems Inc. in San Jose, California, and an activist for the autism cause. She wrote this piece a year after her family moved to Geneva in 1991.)

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61 armed groups threats to ARMM polls

PARANG, SHARIFF KABUNSUAN—POLICE IN the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) have identified at least 61 armed groups that they said were threats to the region's elections in May.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, ARMM police chief, said some of these were private armies while the others were criminal groups.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is talking peace with the government, has also been identified as one of the groups that might disrupt the elections, he said.

Goltiao said the presence of armed groups in the region is considered to be one of the immediate concerns of the police.

"We are confronted with this problem," Goltiao said.

Goltiao identified Sulu as having the most armed groups with 25; followed by Maguindanao with 21; Lanao del Sur with seven; Basilan with five; and Tawi-Tawi with three groups.

Goltiao said at least 29,000 firearms are in the hands of members of these armed groups.

He said police would need all the help they can get, particularly from the military, to prevent violence during the elections.

He also urged civilians to help police monitor potential threats.

Col. Emmanuel Martin, operations chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said authorities are to set up checkpoints to check for unlicensed firearms.

Goltiao said police would also reduce the number of security escorts for politicians.

He said politicians under grave threat could have as many as five police bodyguards. The number of bodyguards allowed for politicians is only two.

Goltiao said police have also identified 264 villages in the ARMM as "areas of immediate concern."

He said the number is higher than that in the last elections in 2004.

In Davao City, Supt. Belfor Causing, Southern Mindanao police spokesperson, said authorities have identified at least 55 areas of concern in the region, 31 of these in the city.

Southern Mindanao is composed of Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley.

Causing said the parameters used in the identification of these areas were the presence of the New People's Army (NPA), intense political rivalry and election-related violence in previous elections.

In Davao del Sur, Senior Supt. Anselmo Pinili, provincial police director, said they have so far identified at least 18 election hot spots in the province.

Pinili said among the areas of immediate concern are found in the hinterlands of Matanao, Don Marcelino and this city.

He said the number of the so-called election hot spots could still increase once police commanders in other towns submit their reports.

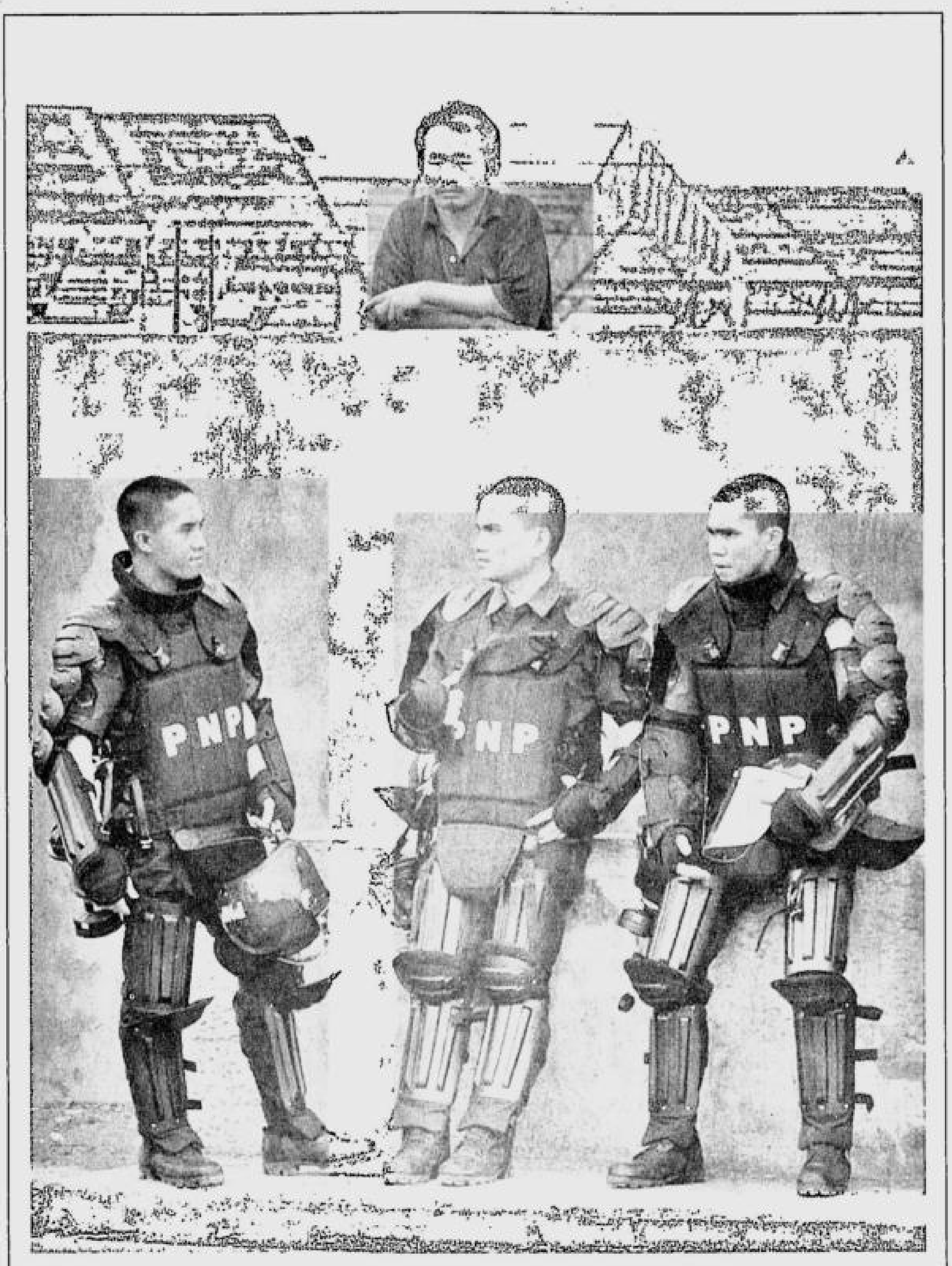
Pinili also announced that he ordered the relief of police officers who have relatives running in the May elections.

Among them was Padada town police chief Insp. Bonjong Razonable.

The police official is a relative of Padada Mayor Antonio Razonable, who is running for reelection.

Pinili said relieving police officials, with politician-relatives, of their assignments would ensure that the police remain nonpartisan.

Pinili also warned politicians against paying permit to campaign fees to the New People's Army saying they could face criminal charges for doing so. *Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*



ON DUTY

ɌEM ZAMORA

Members of an antiriot police team seem unmindful of a man watching security preparations for the Asean summit near the Cebu International Convention Complex. The spot where the policemen stood was part of a no rally zone.

Ecija school faculty bares university exec's mess

CABANATUAN CITY—SOME FACULTY members of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) here have complained about the alleged abuses of their acting president.

They aired their complaints through letters sent to government officials, including Gov. Tomas Joson III, and the media.

They accused Hilario Ortiz, acting president of NEUST, of nepotism, harassment, abuse of authority, and of benefiting materially from some projects of the university.

They also accused him of faking his doctoral degree as they said the university from where he claimed to have finished the academic course did not have a record of his having completed the degree.

They claimed that Ortiz had employed a number of his relatives for certain positions in the university.

They said some faculty members were removed from their positions because they were perceived as among those opposing his leadership.

Ortiz denied the accusations. He confirmed that the office of the governor had looked into the complaints against him.

"I deny the accusations leveled against me. Like what I told officials from the governor's office, it would be better if they could talk with other university officials and get from them the truth," Ortiz, also a lawyer, said.

"If I will be the one who will talk and explain, that will be self-serving," he added.

But he insisted that since he became acting president, he has not appointed any relative to any position in the university.

He said his relatives, who are now working in the university, were appointed by the previous president.

A former vice president for business management and finance, Ortiz was appointed NEUST officer in charge when the incumbent president, Dr. Gemeliano Caling, died in July last year. He was named acting president on Dec. 14.

On his doctoral degree, Ortiz said he has all the documents to show that he really completed the degree. However, he said, the university from where he graduated had misplaced his records.

"But the board of regents had dismissed the complaint alleging that my doctoral degree was fake. In fact, the board designated me as acting president," he said. *Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Calabarzon CIDG chief says 'jueteng' men using his name

LUCENA CITY—THE CHIEF OF the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region warned against the use of his name in the planned revival of the illegal numbers game "jueteng" in Quezon province.

According to Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, CIDG-Calabarzon director, he was informed by a town mayor from the Bondoc Peninsula that a group of gambling brokers had been dropping his name while making the rounds of local officials and police station chiefs in soliciting support for the revival of jueteng in the province.

"I categorically declared that I have nothing to do with their planned illegal act. I would not allow my long years of untainted record in the service to be used by unscrupulous persons in the pursuit of their criminal activities. I will hunt them," Belarma told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

He said he immediately ordered the CIDG operatives in Quezon to track down the group that had been using his name.

He declined to identify the persons involved.

"We're consolidating evidence against the group," he said.

However, a reliable source identified one of the supposed gambling brokers as a certain Joel Leviste, allegedly connected with a certain Tony Ong, one of the jueteng lords that have been working underground to resurrect jueteng in Quezon.

In a related development, it was learned that a local group of gamblers has been operating jueteng in Sariaya town.

The source identified the alleged local jueteng operator as a certain Melchor Chavez.

The local gambling syndicate has been conducting draws three times a day, according to the informant.

"It's like a kangaroo operation. The draws are constantly being held in different places but most often they are being held in Barangay Mamala," the informant said.

Sariaya Mayor Connie Doromal expressed surprise over the information and denied that jueteng had been operating in his town.

"What has been operating here is the legal small town lottery," she said over the phone.

The informant furnished the winning number combinations from the alleged jueteng draws and found that the numbers were different from the STL winning combinations on the same date.

The INQUIRER tried to contact the local police chief but failed.

But, according to Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan Jr., Quezon police chief, what had been based in Mamala were STL employees.

"But I ordered my men to conduct a more thorough investigation. We could not act on unverified reports. I also ordered them to strictly monitor the activities of suspected jueteng operators in the locality," Caragan said.

Last week, Quezon provincial officials and the association of municipal mayors strongly denounced the planned revival of jueteng in the province, saying they were all contented with the operations of STL.

On Tuesday, thousands of STL bettors across the province won a total of P4 million by winning the number combination 21-27 in the first draw of the day, according to an employee of Pirouette Corp., the lottery franchise holder in Quezon.

"It only shows that the lottery is above board. There is no hanky panky," said the employee, who requested anonymity. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Gov't to spend ₱200B for antipoverty plan in Luzon

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Antipoverty programs in the Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB) super region will not fail because 68 percent of the P372-billion budget and projects for the country's five super regions are "heavily clustered and concentrated" on the LUB alone, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said here on Thursday.

"There is no way that you can't escape, that you cannot cross the threshold of poverty here. No way," said Salceda, an economist and one of the speakers at the opening of the two-day antipoverty summit organized by the LUB and the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

"If you fail the whole country fails," he said, citing the role of the clustered regions—Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Mimaropa (Marinduque, Oriental and Occidental Mindoro) and the National Capital Region's 17 cities—as a central focus of investments and infrastructure.

In the summit, Vice President Noli de Castro said housing would be an essential component of the antipoverty campaign.

In his speech at the summit, De Castro said the failures of the past should not "characterize present day development efforts."

Domingo Panganiban, chair of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, said that the administration's poverty-alleviation policies have delivered results to 5.5 million Filipinos.

Last year alone, he said the government gave people access to credit and capital, providing over P76 billion in loans to small entrepreneurs, farmers and fishermen.

"The great battleground for the defense and expansion of national prosperity is the Filipino countryside where two-thirds of the nation's poor reside," Panganiban said.

Edgardo Pamintuan, chair of the LUB, said the super region, formed six months ago, hosts 40 million, or about half of the country's population and 30 percent of the national labor force. It contributes 55 percent to the country's gross domestic product, he said.

He said the 15 "mega-infrastructure" projects cost P200 billion.

These are the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, South Luzon Expressway Toll Road, LRT1-MRT3 Loop, NLEx-SLEx connection via C5, Subic Bay Port Development, Subic-Clark-Tarlac-Dingalan (Aurora) Road, Marikina Infanta Road, North Rail-South Rail Linkage, Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, 300 million liters per day bulk water supply, Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, North Rail, Roro Port linking Lucena and Boac and LRT Line 1 South Extension.

With these features, Salceda called the LUB the country's "single largest bloc" in helping attain a 7-8 percent rise in gross domestic product as a way of battling poverty.

The priority that President Macapagal-Arroyo has put on the LUB, which includes her home region Central Luzon, "makes economic sense in the initial phase of the economic takeoff," he said.

THE GOVERNMENT'S antipoverty plan would allot P200 billion for infrastructure projects in the Luzon Urban Beltway and seeks to reduce poverty that has driven children, like this child, out into the streets.

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

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Comelec to MMDA: Tear down political ads

Project billboards included in order

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS ORdered the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to tear down billboards in project sites and greeting posters and streamers of political personalities.

The directive is contained in Resolution No. 7806 approved on Jan. 16 .

Authority

Under the resolution, the Comelec also gave the MMDA authority to arrest persons posting prohibited election paraphernalia and to remove all illegal propaganda materials outside authorized poster areas.

The agency has jurisdiction over the National Capital Region's 15 cities and two municipalities.

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Posters, streamers, stickers, leaflets, wall paintings and any printed material with the

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Dismissed Pasay officials suing state witnesses

By Jocelyn R. Uy

NINE DISMISSED PASAY CITY officials will file criminal charges against the two councilors who turned state witnesses in the graft case against them.

In a press conference yesterday, ousted Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto and eight city councilors announced they would all file perjury charges against husband and wife Generoso and Ma. Antonia Cuneta, both city councilors, for "telling lies" in the affidavits they gave to the Ombudsman in September.

"I am innocent of their accusations. They were the ones who admitted to receiving [bribes] from the contractors," Calixto told the INQUIRER after the press conference.

According to the officials' counsel, Phil Ramos, the Cunetas accused Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad, Calixto and eight city councilors of receiving P520,000, P260,000 and P130,000, respectively, for the extension of contracts with the local government of private garbage collection firms.

Calixto said he was also considering filing a libel case against the couple, who was granted immunity by the Office of the Ombudsman in exchange for their testimony in the graft case.

Trinidad filed early this month perjury charges against the two councilors after he learned of the couple's affidavit against them in September.

"They (dismissed officials) were not summoned for clarification so (the case) was really railroaded," Ramos said.

The Cunetas were reinstated to the city council on Monday while the others were dismissed from government service for approving P232-million garbage contracts without public bidding.

Calixto said they were meeting with their lawyers to discuss the filing of their candidacies for the coming elections. The dismissed city officials said they would run in the May 14 elections since the dismissal order from the Office of the Ombudsman was not yet final.

"The order was merely administrative. According to the government code, only the courts can remove an elected official [from his post]," former Sen. Rene Saguisag, consultant to the city officials, told reporters yesterday.

METROBRIEFS

Ali to run for mayor

IT'S OFFICIAL. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza wants his son, Arnold "Ali" Atienza, to succeed him as the city's highest official. Delivering his State of the City Address at the Rajah Sulayman Park yesterday afternoon, the mayor announced that the young Atienza would run for the post of mayor of Manila in the coming local elections. He explained that his choice of Ali as the candidate to support in the next elections was bolstered by the results of consultations he had with various political and secular leaders in the city. "They were in favor of Ali entering the political arena because they believe that he shares my commitment and support for urban development that have once again caused Manila to rise in prominence," he said. Ali presently holds positions as the Presidential Adviser on Youth and Sports, chair of Manila Sports Council and Inner City Development. "You do not have to have an electoral post to show a capability for good governance," Atienza said. "All you need is competence, wisdom, vision and a passion to serve the people. It also helps that the next mayor of the city has the youth and dedication and I believe Ali has all these qualities. I believe he would continue my plans for Manila," he added. Atienza also dispelled persistent rumors earlier that boxing hero Manny Pacquiao would be his son's running mate as he named three candidates for the vice mayoral post: Rep. Banzai Nueva, Councilor Greco Belgica and former Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing.

Tina G. Santos

NPD head relieved

THE NORTHERN Police District yesterday announced the relief of Caloocan City police chief Supt. Geronimo Reside amid talks that a local politician had a hand in the move because of his perceived closeness to city Mayor Enrico Echiverri, on top of his alleged failure to address the crime problem in the city. Supt. William Macavinta, former chief of Kalibo, Aklan took over as officer in charge yesterday. NPD Director Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, however, denied the allegations. Caloocan City was included in the list of Commission on Elections in the previous local election as an election hotspot.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Canadian trader gets jail term for swindling businesswoman

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A CANADIAN BUSINESSMAN was sentenced yesterday to 10-17 years imprisonment for swindling a Filipino woman of her lifetime savings in a syndicated immigration investment scheme in 1993.

David Thomas, who is also facing a string of estafa cases in other courts in Metro Manila, was found guilty of duping Magdalena Moreno of $80,000.

The money was supposed to be invested in a resort in Canada as a prerequisite to the approval of Moreno's immigration visa.

Judge Fortunito Madrona of the Parañaque Regional Trial Court Branch 274 also ordered Thomas to give Moreno the same amount and P100,000 more for moral damages and the cost of the court case.

"The court readily picks Mrs. Moreno as to be more credible as a witness and in testimony than Mr. Thomas … [her] material assertions are fully backed up by documentary evidence," the 28-page decision read.

The court said it found many "instances of untruthfulness" in Thomas' testimony in contrast to Moreno's which was "dead earnest and believable."

Madrona also said Moreno would not have endured the rigors of trips between Canada and Manila to seek justice if her complaint was without basis.

Moreno sobbed quietly while the verdict was being read. Meanwhile, the burly and bald Thomas, who came with his Filipino wife, clung to a nearby chair for support.

Moreno and her husband Ernesto both worked in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. They met Thomas through an ad in a newspaper in July 1991, where he was identified as a Canadian Embassy consultant.

With Thomas' assistance, the couple applied to settle in Canada as independent immigrants.

When the application was turned down in April 1993, the Morenos went to see Thomas in his Parañaque City office. He convinced the couple to invest in Birchwood Village Greens, a golf course and leisure homes development in Canada, so they could apply for immigrant visas as entrepreneurs.

Thomas told the couple that he and a partner, Delbert George Blewett, had just acquired the resort through their company, Asia Ventures Alberta Inc. He also guaranteed the Morenos jobs as head cook and caterer and sports director at the resort.

Court documents said Thomas told the couple they would not be able to enter Canada unless they invested in the resort.

Moreno transferred $80,000 to Blewett's account in Canada. In November 1993, Canadian immigration officers denied the Morenos' application for visas as entrepreneurs but allowed them to enter the country as independent applicants.

When the Moreno family arrived in Canada in December that year, Moreno learned that the resort was foreclosed. She also found out that immigration officials turned down the application of Blewett's company for an immigrant investor fund because he was involved in another dubious investor fund.

Moreno filed criminal complaints against Thomas after the Interpol endorsed her case to the National Bureau of Investigation in March 2000.

"I have fought for six years, even putting at risk my relationship with my husband and my children. I am happy that justice was served," Moreno told reporters yesterday.

Her lawyers, Michelle Go and Lawrence Fortun, will seek a hold departure order against Thomas.

6 hurt in gas explosion in Mandaluyong

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOUR PERSONS, INCLUDING two girls, were seriously injured the other night from a gas explosion in their two-story house in Mandaluyong City.

Two other persons sustained minor injuries.

A leaking gas range reportedly triggered the explosion in Barangay Barangka Itaas, FO2 Victorio Tablay told the INQUIRER.

The seriously injured victims were transferred to the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City from the Mandaluyong City Medical Center for treatment, Tablay said.

Lorivic Boncay, 31, was on the ground floor of the two-story house on Macaturing Street when she noticed about 7:25 p.m. on Wednesday the smell of liquefied petroleum gas coming from the second floor.

When Boncay went up, she saw 54-year-old Carlos Bonto in front of the gas stove. Bonto said he was trying to fix the leak.

Boncay was about on her way down when the explosion occurred.

The impact threw Bonto, his 50-year-old wife Rosita and their granddaughters Cheska, 8, and Erica, 3, against the wooden walls of the house.

Though injured, the victims managed to get out of the house.

Tablay said all four victims had about the same extent of injury.

Boncay and her relative, Ivy Boncay, 27, who was on the ground floor, sustained minor wounds and had been released from the hospital, Tablay said.

The fire that resulted from the explosion razed the house, causing damage to property worth about P200,000.

Nearby houses were also partially damaged.

Responding firefighters managed to put out the fire less than an hour later, Tablay said.

Stude dies after fall from school building

By Emman Cena

STUDENTS OF JOSE RIZAL University in Mandaluyong City yesterday got the shock of their lives when they came upon the body of a young woman sprawled on the school grounds early morning Wednesday.

Unconfirmed reports said that the student, a first year nursing student and reportedly a scholar at the university, allegedly ended her life by jumping off from the fourth floor of a school building.

She was rushed to the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital at about 8:50 a.m. and was pronounced dead before lunchtime yesterday, according to hospital attendants.

The attendants, who declined to be identified, said the girl was brought to the hospital by school doctors and officials.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach for comment JRU officials and lawyer Floresto Arizala, the medico-legal officer called to the case.

Classmates of the victim told the INQUIRER that they were on their way to their classes when the victim received a text message from a still unknown sender.

"She kept on calling a number with no success, and then she broke up with the group. She was crying but didn't tell us what was going on," Gelly Rose Fernandez said. Another classmate said the victim was kidding some classmates on Monday and asked if she would die in case she jumped off a building.

"I don't see any reason why she would do this thing (jump off)," the victim's mother told the INQUIRER. Teacher Maribel Lentejas, who was on the second floor when the incident occurred, said she saw a "shadow" of someone falling from the building's upper floor.

"We then saw her (the victim) sprawled on the ground. I immediately called the doctor and brought her to the Lourdes Hospital," Lentejas said.

Comelec to MMDA: Tear down political ads

From page A19

picture or name of a person or any broadcast advertisement featuring his/her name, voice or image would be treated as premature campaign materials if the person eventually ran for public office, the Comelec said.

Deadline

Republic Act No. 9006, the Fair Elections Act of 2001, required candidates to remove such printed and broadcast material within three days after filing their certificates of candidacy, Comelec said.

Post-holiday

It noted that even after the holiday season, streamers, posters and leaflets containing holiday greetings of incumbent officials and known personalities remained.

The Comelec also noted the practice of some government officials who put up signs beside finished or ongoing projects claiming the projects were undertaken through their efforts.

Reforms

Several electoral reform groups said the Comelec should disqualify from running people who posted campaign materials disguised as project billboards or greeting streamers before the start of the election period on Jan. 14.

Conference

Meanwhile, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said he and the other election commissioners would hold a conference with top officials of the police, military and the departments of budget, education and justice on Jan. 24 at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Preparations of the elections and enforcement of election laws and deputizing government agencies would be tackled during the meeting, he said. Similar dialogues would also be held at the provincial and municipal levels later on.

Prosecution

Details of gun ban implementation, honoraria for public school teachers, identification of election "hotspots" and prosecution of election law offenders are also expected to be threshed out during the meeting.

Blight

The presence of numerous billboards, posters and streamers put up by political personalities or would-be candidates for public office have long been the bane not only of concerned citizens but environmental groups.

Many environment advocates believe the ads are a blight in the urban landscape.

The Department of Public Works and Highways, on the other hand, has resumed its drive to bring down giant billboards, including those that belong to politicians, that violate the National Building Code or are threats to public safety.

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ZAMCELCO)
Pulik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of CONCRETE POLES on consignment basis, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description	
01	200	pcs	ROUND CENTRIFUGAL PRESTRESSED CONCRETE POLES	
			Approved Budget Cost	P22,274.80 / pole
			On Consignment Basis	

Specification:

Height	14.00 Meters (45 Footer)
Design Load	500 Kgs.
Ultimate Load	1,000 Kgs.
Top Diameter (mm)	203 mm
Butt Diameter (mm)	390 mm
Weight (Kgs)	2,000 Kgs
Pole Thickness	80 mm

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of **January 23, 2007** and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding upon payment of nonrefundable fee of **P3,500.00.**

Bidding will be conducted on **January 30, 2007.**

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before **2:00 p.m. of January 30, 2007**. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI-Jan. 17 & 18, 2007)

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental • Tel. Nos. 4712-339; 746-9255 Fax No. (034) 4712-829
E-mail: noceco@glinesnx.com.ph
Website: www.noceco.ph

January 11, 2007

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The NEGROS OCCIDENTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (NOCECO) is inviting all interested contractors to pre-qualify and bid for the SUPPLY OF MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A 69KV SUB-TRANSMISSION LINE FROM BINALBAGAN TO LA CASTELLANA WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 20 KMS.

The 69 Sub-transmission line will utilize 22 mtrs. pre-stressed rectangular "I" Section Concrete Pole.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Interested bidders shall comply with Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Chairman, Noel P. Garbo) as follows:

a) Company Profile
b) Business Registration
c) Business Permit
d) BIR/VAT Certificate
e) Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
f) List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
g) Financial Statement

And must be able to pay Php10,000.00 (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

Schedule of Activities are as follows:

BIDDING SCHEDULES	
Intent to Bid	January 24, 2007
Accreditation Period	January 25 - February 2, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference	February 9, 2007
Public Bidding	February 19, 2007

NOCECO reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accepts proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **LAMBERTO M. CANLAS**
General Manager

(PDI - Jan 18 & 19, 2007)

METRO
Citizen's Call

Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.

- Did a signage make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
- Street diggings forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

JUST TEXT SMS: ccall name/age/location <message>
MMS: <insert photo> ccall name/age/location <caption/message>

[illegible]

Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police.

INQUIRER

Israeli army chief resigns over Lebanon war

HALUTZ AP

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL'S MILITARY chief resigned Wednesday over the failures of the Lebanon war, in a second blow to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's unpopular government after a graft probe was launched.

In what several newspapers called an "earthquake," Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz became the most senior head to roll over last year's war against Lebanon's Hezbollah militia, which has been bitterly criticized in Israel.

"I have accomplished the objective that was set for me at the end of the Lebanon war, which was to study and learn the lessons from what transpired," wrote Halutz, 58, in his letter of resignation.

"I consider under the conditions it is my duty to resign my office immediately."

Defense Minister Amir Peretz said Halutz would remain in his post until a successor is named, as Hezbollah celebrated the general's downfall by sending fireworks into the night sky over Beirut.

Olmert, scraping the bottom of public opinion ratings, said a successor would be chosen in the coming days after consultations with former prime ministers, defense ministers, chiefs of staff, the foreign minister and the opposition in parliament.

"I very much regret the chief of staff's resignation," he said.

Halutz resigned just hours after Israel's chief prosecutor ordered a criminal investigation against Olmert—the latest in a string of corruption scandals described by one newspaper as "Sodom and Gomorrah."

Olmert, who has been hounded by allegations of corruption since before he took office last May, is suspected of intervening on behalf of a friend while acting finance minister in 2005 during the privatization of Israel's second-largest bank. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Following Halutz's resignation, political commentators in Israel turned their attention to who could be the next official to pay the price for the mid-summer war, which failed to achieve its goals of freeing two captured Israeli soldiers and stopping Hezbollah rocket fire.

Israeli army radio said Halutz's resignation would, in a "domino effect," lead to the resignations of Peretz and Olmert themselves, sentiments echoed in the press and by opposition lawmakers.

"The chief of staff's resignation officially confirms the failure of the Lebanon war and compels the prime minister and the defense minister to stop holding on to their positions and resign from their posts," Yisrael Katz of the right-wing opposition Likud party told the Ynet news service.

Wrote the Maariv daily: "Now it is Defense Minister Amir Peretz's turn to hand over the keys, so that the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) will be able to embark on a new path.

"And what about Olmert? The public will judge his performance," it said.

The war on Hezbollah, launched after the Shiite militia—backed by Iran and Syria—seized the two soldiers in a cross-border raid on July 12, had raised a storm of outrage in Israel following the UN-brokered ceasefire that took effect on Aug. 14.

The conflict killed more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers, and more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians. *AFP*

Maoists dissolve 'people's' gov't, court

KATMANDU—NEPAL'S MAOISTS WERE Thursday set to dissolve their "People's Government" and "People's Courts" which ruled large swathes of the country during a decade-long insurgency.

"All our local bodies will be formally be dissolved from Thursday," former rebel chief Prachanda told the BBC Nepali Service.

Prachanda, meaning "fierce one," was to issue an official statement later in the day, his officers told AFP.

"In principle, we (the Maoists), in an accord reached on Nov. 8 with the government, have already agreed to dissolve our local-level governments after the formation of the interim legislature, which took place Monday.

In the BBC interview, the Maoist leader who uses only one name, also denied that he had ordered party cadres to be killed or tortured, but he did admit to "weakness" on the central committee.

"Our party's central committee meeting recently decided to visit all regions and districts across the country to apologize for weakness during the 10-year-long people's war soon after the formation of the interim government." Nepal's once feared Maoist forces began putting their weapons under United Nations supervision on Wednesday, a key part of a peace deal in the Himalayan country.

The rebels claim to have 35,000 soldiers in their People's Liberation Army, but independent estimates put their numbers at closer to 12,000.

Apart from those needed to protect Maoist camps and leaders, the rebels are to place all weapons in the containers monitored by the UN.

Under the peace deal, reached late last year, the Nepal Army is due to be confined to its barracks and place the same number of weapons as the Maoists under UN supervision.

Once bitter foes, the Maoists joined a new parliament alongside the seven main political parties late Monday after a new temporary constitution was approved.

King Gyanendra was stripped of his status as head of state and lost control of the army.

Eighty-three Maoist members of parliament were sworn in to the 330-seat house nearly nine months after the Maoists and the government struck a ceasefire deal. *AFP*

PROFESSOR Stephen W. Hawking at a press conference where the directors of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists pushed the hands of the 'Doomsday Clock'—a barometer of nuclear danger for the past 55 years—by two minutes closer to the midnight hour symbolizing nuclear conflict, in central London, Jan. 17. AFP

Nuke, climate perils push Doomsday Clock

LONDON—THE WORLD IS inching closer to nuclear Armageddon, top scientists warned Wednesday as they moved a symbolic Doomsday Clock nearer to midnight and stressed the growing threat from climate change.

Stephen Hawking, the renowned Cambridge University physicist, was among 18 Nobel laureates backing the warning, which cited North Korea and Iran as key factors in the increased danger of a nuclear winter.

"It is now five minutes to midnight," Hawking said after the clock was moved forward two minutes from 11:53 p.m., where it had stood since 2002.

"We foresee great peril if governments and scientists don't take action now to render nuclear weapons obsolete and to prevent further climate change," he added.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has kept a Doomsday clock since 1947 as a reminder of the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

The publication, whose contributors have included Albert Einstein, was set up by scientists who had worked on the Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bombs detonated over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

At simultaneous events in London and Washington, the clock's big hand was pushed forward again, its sixth move since the end of the Cold War.

"We stand at the brink of a Second Nuclear Age. Not since the first atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has the world faced such perilous choices," said the bulletin in a statement.

"North Korea's recent test of a nuclear weapon, Iran's nuclear ambitions, a renewed US emphasis on the military utility of nuclear weapons, the failure to adequately secure nuclear materials, and the continued presence of some 26,000 nuclear weapons in the United States and Russia are symptomatic of a failure to solve the problems posed by the most destructive technology on Earth." Each of the two nations' warheads was between eight and 40 times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima and 50 of them could kill 200 million people, the statement said.

It also criticized the US, Russia and other signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for having "failed in their obligation to make serious strides toward disarmament." The London event was held at the Royal Society, Britain's top scientific institution, whose president Martin Rees stressed the threat of climate change as well as nuclear proliferation.

"Nuclear weapons still pose the most catastrophic and immediate threat to humanity, but climate change and emerging technologies in the life sciences also have the potential to end civilization as we know it," he said.

The statement added that the expansion of civilian nuclear power programs around the world "increases the risk of nuclear proliferation" because enrichment facilities can be modified to produce uranium for weapons use.

First set at seven minutes to midnigh—a phrase that has become part of pop culture—the clock moved 17 times in response to global events.

The most recent shift was in 2002 when it moved forward two minutes because the US withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and terrorists were known to be seeking nuclear and biological weapons. *AFP*

Solar, hydrogen power eliminates utility bills in US home

By Jon Hurdle

EAST AMWELL, NEW JERSEY—Michael Strizki heats and cools his house year-round and runs a full range of appliances including such power-guzzlers as a hot tub and a wide-screen TV without paying a penny in utility bills.

His conventional-looking family home in the pinewoods of western New Jersey is the first in the United States to show that a combination of solar and hydrogen power can generate all the electricity needed for a home.

The Hopewell Project, named for a nearby town, comes at a time of increasing concern over US energy security and worries over the effects of burning fossil fuels on the climate.

"People understand that climate change is a big concern but they don't know what they can do about it," said Gian-Paolo Caminiti of Renewable Energy International, the commercial arm of the project. "There's a psychological dividend in doing the right thing," he said.

Strizki runs the 3,000-square-foot house with electricity generated by a 1,000-square-foot roof full of photovoltaic cells on a nearby building, an electrolyzer that uses the solar power to generate hydrogen from water, and a number of hydrogen tanks that store the gas until it is needed by the fuel cell.

In the summer, the solar panels generate 60 percent more electricity than the super-insulated house needs. The excess is stored in the form of hydrogen which is used in the winter—when the solar panels can't meet all the domestic demand—to make electricity in the fuel cell. Strizki also uses the hydrogen to power his fuel-cell driven car, which, like the domestic power plant, is pollution-free.

Solar power currently contributes only 0.1 percent of US energy needs but the number of photovoltaic installations grew by 20 percent in 2006, and the cost of making solar panels is dropping by about 7 percent annually, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association.

As costs decline and the search accelerates for clean alternatives to expensive and dirty fossil fuels, some analysts predict solar is poised for a significant expansion in the next five to 10 years.

The New Jersey project, which opened in October 2006 after four years of planning and building, cost around $500,000, some $225,000 of which was provided by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. The state, a leading supporter of renewable energy, aims to have 20 percent of its energy coming from renewables by 2020, and currently has the largest number of solar-power installations of any US state except California.

New Jersey's utility regulator supported the project because it helps achieve the state's renewable-energy goals, said Doyal Siddell a spokesperson for the agency.

"The solar-hydrogen residence project provides a tremendous opportunity to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming," he said.

The project also got equipment and expertise from a number of commercial sponsors including Exide, which donated some $50,000 worth of batteries, and Swageloc, an Ohio company that provided stainless steel piping costing around $28,000. Strizki kicked in about $100,000 of his own money.

While the cost may deter all but wealthy environmentalists from converting their homes, Strizki and his associates stress the project is designed to be replicated and that the price tag on the prototype is a lot higher than imitators would pay. Now that first-time costs of research and design have been met, the price would be about $100,000, Strizki said.

But that's still too high for the project to be widely replicated, said Marchant Wentworth of the Union of Concerned Scientists, an environmental group in Washington. To be commonly adopted, such installations would have to be able to sell excess power to the grid, generating a revenue stream that could be used to attract capital, he said.

"You need to make the financing within reach of real people," Wentworth said.

Caminiti argues that the cost of the hydrogen/solar setup works out at about $4,000 a year when its $100,000 cost is spread over the anticipated 25-year lifespan of the equipment.

That's still a lot higher than the $1,500 a year the average US homeowner spends on energy, according to the federal government. Even if gasoline costs averaging about $1,000 per car annually are included in the energy mix, the renewables option is still more expensive than the grid/gasoline combination. *Reuters*

Alleged 'Big Brother' racist taunts inflame India

SHETTY REUTERS

NEW DELHI—ANGER OVER ALLEGED racist taunting of a Bollywood star on a British reality TV show simmered in India for a second day Thursday, even as an Indian official tried to cool down the issue.

Shilpa Shetty, 31, was repeatedly reduced to tears during "Celebrity Big Brother" by a fellow contestant who has called the actress' cooking untrustworthy, mocked her accent and complained about her "screeching."

Another contestant said Indians were thin because they undercooked their food.

Indian newspapers' splashed the story across their front pages for a second day Thursday. TV news channels ran clips of Shetty crying.

A Hindustan Times newspaper editorial said "attacks on her (Shetty) show that racism is never really far from the surface."

The brouhaha has drawn in everyone from British Prime Minister Tony Blair to a group of Shetty fans who protested in eastern India on Wednesday.

India's junior foreign minister even said his government would take up the matter with London.

But on Thursday, India's finance minister, P. Chidambaram, tried to play down the controversy.

"What has happened is in a particular television show with a particular format that allows bad behavior to be televised," he told reporters after a meeting with British Treasury chief Gordon Brown in New Delhi.

There was "no need for concerted national outrage," said an Indian Express newspaper editorial. "The TV program in question is designed to bring out the worst in participants."

The Express also said Indians should examine their own prejudices, such as discrimination against lower-caste people, and against Muslims, a minority in predominantly Hindu India.

"If racism is a fact in many interactions in British society, prejudice is a quotidian reality of Indian social life," the newspaper said.

The independent regulator of Britain's media and telecommunications industries said it had received 19,300 complaints against the show, shattering earlier records.

As the controversy has grown, so have the program's ratings.

It pulled 4.5 million viewers on Tuesday, up from 3.5 million on Monday. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Senate measure bucks US troop surge

WASHINGTON—TRYING TO GET President George W. Bush to reverse plans for boosting US troop strength in Iraq, senators from both political parties unveiled on Wednesday a nonbinding resolution opposing the increase.

"I believe that when a president goes way off course on something as important as Iraq, the single most effective way to get him to change course is to demonstrate that his policy has waning or no support—from both parties," Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Joseph Biden, a Delaware Democrat and one of the cosponsors, told reporters.

The White House sought to corral lawmaker support for Bush's plan to send some 21,500 more US troops to Iraq to try to stabilize Baghdad and Anbar province.

Some senators who visited the White House and met National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said on Wednesday they may produce their own counter-resolution supporting the president's plan, setting the stage for a major debate on Iraq policy.

"There were senators who were suggesting that approach ... of not giving up in Iraq," said Republican Texas Sen. John Cornyn.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, who earlier had suggested he would try to block a vote on any resolution rejecting the troop increase, said Wednesday he favored the Senate considering "various alternatives" on Iraq.

The bipartisan resolution opposing the troop increase also called for a strategy for a political settlement in Iraq, and a regional, internationally sponsored peace process on Iraq.

"Whereas the US strategy and presence on the ground in Iraq can only be sustained with the support of the American people and bipartisan support from Congress ... it is not in the national interest of the United States to deepen its military involvement in Iraq, particularly by escalating US troop presence in Iraq," the resolution said.

Biden drafted the resolution along with Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, and Republican Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, a long-time war critic who is said to harbor presidential ambitions.

Bush has said he will not be swayed by Congress or public criticism. "I made my decision and we're going forward," Bush told CBS' "60 Minutes" in an interview broadcast on Sunday.

In addition to the Senate, the House is also planning a non-binding resolution rejecting Bush's plans, but House leaders have said the Senate can go first. *Reuters*

SMOKE rises from a neighborhood in central Baghdad at sunrise Jan. 18 as mortar shells and gunfire rang in the area. A car bomb aimed at a police patrol killed four people and wounded 10 others early Thursday. AFP

White House to end eavesdropping on Americans

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADministration, in a surprise reversal, said Wednesday that it had agreed to give a secret court jurisdiction over the National Security Agency's wiretapping program and would end its practice of eavesdropping without warrants on Americans suspected of ties to terrorists.

The Justice Department said it had worked out an "innovative" arrangement with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that provided the "necessary speed and agility" to provide court approval to monitor international communications of people inside the United States without jeopardizing national security.

The decision capped 13 months of bruising national debate over the reach of the president's wartime authorities and his claims of executive power, and it came as the administration faced legal and political hurdles in its effort to continue the surveillance program.

The new Democratic-led Congress has pledged several investigations. More immediately, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales is expected to face hostile questioning on Thursday from the Senate Judiciary Committee on the program. And an appellate court in Cincinnati is scheduled to hear arguments in two weeks on the government's appeal of an earlier ruling declaring the program illegal and unconstitutional. Democrats praised the administration's decision but said it should have come much sooner.

"The announcement today is welcome news," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., who leads the intelligence committee. "But it is also confirmation that the administration's go-it-alone approach, effectively excluding Congress and the courts and operating outside the law, was unnecessary." "I don't think the timing is coincidental," said Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y. "They knew they had a very real problem, and they're trying to deflect it."

The administration continued to assert Wednesday that the NSA program had operated legally, but it also said the time had come to allow the intelligence surveillance court, known as the FISA court, to review all warrants on all wiretaps in terrorism investigations.

President Bush has authorized the continuation of the NSA program every 45 days by executive order to allow the NSA to conduct wiretaps on international communications without court warrants. When the current order expires, however, President Bush has decided not to reauthorize the program, officials said. *NYT*

Icy storm kills 65 in 9 US states

SAN ANTONIO—AN ICY STORM blamed for at least 65 deaths in nine states spread snow and freezing rain across Texas all the way to the Mexican border, immobilizing communities unaccustomed to such cold.

Hundreds of airline flights were canceled, tens of thousands of electricity customers lost power and a 485-km stretch of Interstate 10, a major east-west highway, was closed.

More than 350 flights out of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, San Antonio and Austin were canceled as officials worked to de-ice runways.

Across the country, storms since Friday have cut off what had been an unseasonably mild winter in many areas. Ten deaths were blamed on the storm in Texas.

In Oklahoma, the ice storm was blamed for at least 23 deaths, most from auto accidents, and about 78,000 utility customers remained without power.

In the mountains north of Los Angeles, a sudden snowstorm brought traffic to a halt on busy Interstate 5.

California already had been suffering from an unusual cold snap that threatened many of its winter crops and wiped out a most of its citrus. *AP*

CACTI are covered with Styrofoam cups to protect them from the cold Jan. 16, in Surprise, Ariz. Nursery owner Lorrie Joanne Scott says the cups protect the plants as the nights start to get chilly. AP

Obama seems to ask, why not run the race?

By Jeff Zeleny

WASHINGTON—THERE IS ALways, it seems, a fresh new face breezing into a presidential race, offering himself as the person to change the tone, eliminate the vitriol and transform the old ways of politics.

Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois is auditioning for that role in the 2008 campaign. He said so himself, leaping into the Democratic contest this week on a promise to "advance the cause of change and progress that we so desperately need."

OBAMA REUTERS

A long line of Democrats, Republicans and independents have gone before him, casting themselves as the sparkling candidate of the new politics only to find that their freshness withers well before the balloting begins. Think John Anderson, Gary Hart, Ross Perot.

How can Obama avoid a similar fate?

"Novelty alone is not a criteria for success, nor should it be," he said in an interview on Wednesday as he walked through the hallways of the Senate. "I do think there are moments in American history where there are opportunities to change the language of politics or set the country's sights in a different place, and I think we're in one of those moments."

Then, after pausing for a moment, he added: "Whether I'm the person to help move that forward or somebody else is, is not for me to determine."

The biography and charisma of Obama, 45, has catapulted him into early prominence and sets him apart from the parade of former presidential hopefuls like Howard Dean, Perot, Jerry Brown and others who have challenged the status quo. But like them, he aspires to tap into a similar grassroots following even as he gains endorsements from the party's traditional kingmakers. *NYT*

Drop in US cancer deaths may be a trend

THE NUMBER OF CANCER deaths in the United States has dropped for the second year in a row, the American Cancer Society reported Wednesday. The finding suggests that the small drop reported last year—the first in more than 70 years—was real, possibly the start of a continuing decrease and not merely a statistical fluke, researchers said.

Much of the decrease is due to smoking cessation and improved detection and treatment of colorectal, breast and prostate cancers. But it has taken enormous efforts and ingenuity to produce relatively small gains.

From 2003 to 2004, the number of cancer deaths fell by 3,014, considerably more than the previous year's decline, 369. (These are the latest years for which figures are available.) Although the drop is notable, it still pales in comparison to the number of cancer deaths, 553,888, in 2004. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, after heart disease.

The greatest decreases in mortality have been in colorectal cancer—1,110 fewer deaths in men, 1,094 fewer in women.

Dr. Elizabeth Ward, a managing director in epidemiology and surveillance at the cancer society, said the main factor in the decrease was screening for colorectal cancer, which can detect the disease early, when it is most treatable, or even prevent it by finding precancerous polyps, which can be removed before they turn malignant. Progress has been significant even though only about half the adults who should be screened have been. If more people were screened, there would be even steeper declines in death and the incidence of the disease. *NYT*

Not even close: World falling behind on 2015 education goal

By David Alexander

WASHINGTON—ACCESS TO education increased dramatically over the past century but 323 million children worldwide are still not in school and efforts to achieve universal primary education by 2015 are likely to fail, a new study said on Wednesday.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Senate measure bucks US troop surge

WASHINGTON—TRYING TO GET President George W. Bush to reverse plans for boosting US troop strength in Iraq, senators from both political parties unveiled on Wednesday a nonbinding resolution opposing the increase.

"I believe that when a president goes way off course on something as important as Iraq, the single most effective way to get him to change course is to demonstrate that his policy has waning or no support—from both parties," Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Joseph Biden, a Delaware Democrat and one of the cosponsors, told reporters.

The White House sought to corral lawmaker support for Bush's plan to send some 21,500 more US troops to Iraq to try to stabilize Baghdad and Anbar province.

Some senators who visited the White House and met National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said on Wednesday they may produce their own counter-resolution supporting the president's plan, setting the stage for a major debate on Iraq policy.

"There were senators who were suggesting that approach … of not giving up in Iraq," said Republican Texas Sen. John Cornyn.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, who earlier had suggested he would try to block a vote on any resolution rejecting the troop increase, said Wednesday he favored the Senate considering "various alternatives" on Iraq.

The bipartisan resolution opposing the troop increase also called for a strategy for a political settlement in Iraq, and a regional, internationally sponsored peace process on Iraq.

"Whereas the US strategy and presence on the ground in Iraq can only be sustained with the support of the American people and bipartisan support from Congress … it is not in the national interest of the United States to deepen its military involvement in Iraq, particularly by escalating US troop presence in Iraq," the resolution said.

Biden drafted the resolution along with Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, and Republican Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, a long-time war critic who is said to harbor presidential ambitions.

Bush has said he will not be swayed by Congress or public criticism. "I made my decision and we're going forward," Bush told CBS' "60 Minutes" in an interview broadcast on Sunday.

In addition to the Senate, the House is also planning a non-binding resolution rejecting Bush's plans, but House leaders have said the Senate can go first. *Reuters*

SMOKE rises from a neighborhood in central Baghdad at sunrise Jan. 18 as mortar shells and gunfire rang in the area. A car bomb aimed at a police patrol killed four people and wounded 10 others early Thursday. AFP

White House to end eavesdropping on Americans

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADministration, in a surprise reversal, said Wednesday that it had agreed to give a secret court jurisdiction over the National Security Agency's wiretapping program and would end its practice of eavesdropping without warrants on Americans suspected of ties to terrorists.

The Justice Department said it had worked out an "innovative" arrangement with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that provided the "necessary speed and agility" to provide court approval to monitor international communications of people inside the United States without jeopardizing national security.

The decision capped 13 months of bruising national debate over the reach of the president's wartime authorities and his claims of executive power, and it came as the administration faced legal and political hurdles in its effort to continue the surveillance program.

The new Democratic-led Congress has pledged several investigations. More immediately, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales is expected to face hostile questioning on Thursday from the Senate Judiciary Committee on the program. And an appellate court in Cincinnati is scheduled to hear arguments in two weeks on the government's appeal of an earlier ruling declaring the program illegal and unconstitutional. Democrats praised the administration's decision but said it should have come much sooner.

"The announcement today is welcome news," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., who leads the intelligence committee. "But it is also confirmation that the administration's go-it-alone approach, effectively excluding Congress and the courts and operating outside the law, was unnecessary." "I don't think the timing is coincidental," said Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y. "They knew they had a very real problem, and they're trying to deflect it."

The administration continued to assert Wednesday that the NSA program had operated legally, but it also said the time had come to allow the intelligence surveillance court, known as the FISA court, to review all warrants on all wiretaps in terrorism investigations.

President Bush has authorized the continuation of the NSA program every 45 days by executive order to allow the NSA to conduct wiretaps on international communications without court warrants. When the current order expires, however, President Bush has decided not to reauthorize the program, officials said. *NYT*

Drop in US cancer deaths may be a trend

THE NUMBER OF CANCER deaths in the United States has dropped for the second year in a row, the American Cancer Society reported Wednesday. The finding suggests that the small drop reported last year—the first in more than 70 years—was real, possibly the start of a continuing decrease and not merely a statistical fluke, researchers said.

Much of the decrease is due to smoking cessation and improved detection and treatment of colorectal, breast and prostate cancers. But it has taken enormous efforts and ingenuity to produce relatively small gains.

From 2003 to 2004, the number of cancer deaths fell by 3,014, considerably more than the previous year's decline, 369. (These are the latest years for which figures are available.) Although the drop is notable, it still pales in comparison to the number of cancer deaths, 553,888, in 2004. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, after heart disease.

The greatest decreases in mortality have been in colorectal cancer—1,110 fewer deaths in men, 1,094 fewer in women.

Dr. Elizabeth Ward, a managing director in epidemiology and surveillance at the cancer society, said the main factor in the decrease was screening for colorectal cancer, which can detect the disease early, when it is most treatable, or even prevent it by finding precancerous polyps, which can be removed before they turn malignant. Progress has been significant even though only about half the adults who should be screened have been. If more people were screened, there would be even steeper declines in death and the incidence of the disease. *NYT*

Icy storm kills 65 in 9 US states

SAN ANTONIO—AN ICY STORM blamed for at least 65 deaths in nine states spread snow and freezing rain across Texas all the way to the Mexican border, immobilizing communities unaccustomed to such cold.

Hundreds of airline flights were canceled, tens of thousands of electricity customers lost power and a 485-km stretch of Interstate 10, a major east-west highway, was closed.

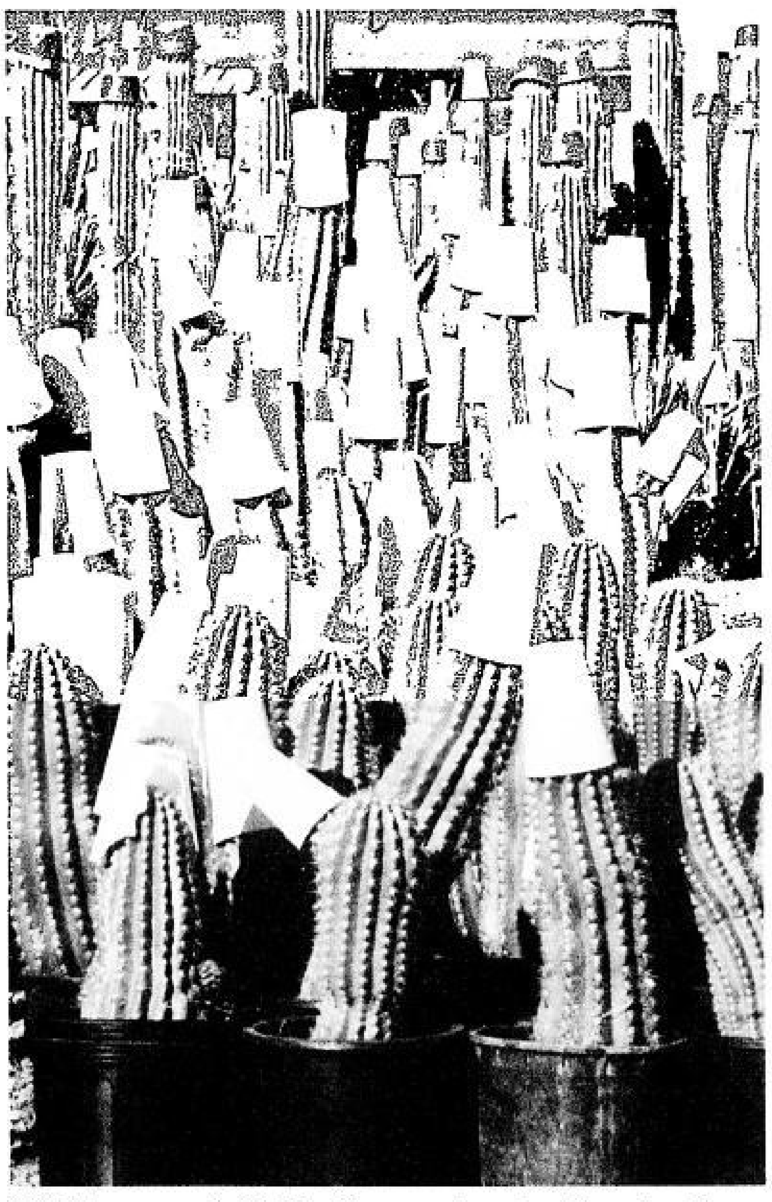
More than 350 flights out of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, San Antonio and Austin were canceled as officials worked to de-ice runways.

Across the country, storms since Friday have cut off what had been an unseasonably mild winter in many areas. Ten deaths were blamed on the storm in Texas.

In Oklahoma, the ice storm was blamed for at least 23 deaths, most from auto accidents, and about 78,000 utility customers remained without power.

In the mountains north of Los Angeles, a sudden snowstorm brought traffic to a halt on busy Interstate 5.

California already had been suffering from an unusual cold snap that threatened many of its winter crops and wiped out a most of its citrus. *AP*



CACTI are covered with Styrofoam cups to protect them from the cold Jan. 16, in Surprise, Ariz. Nursery owner Lorrie Joanne Scott says the cups protect the plants as the nights start to get chilly. AP

Obama seems to ask, why not run the race?

By Jeff Zeleny

WASHINGTON—THERE IS ALways, it seems, a fresh new face breezing into a presidential race, offering himself as the person to change the tone, eliminate the vitriol and transform the old ways of politics.

Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois is auditioning for that role in the 2008 campaign. He said so himself, leaping into the Democratic contest this week on a promise to "advance the cause of change and progress that we so desperately need."

OBAMA REUTERS

A long line of Democrats, Republicans and independents have gone before him, casting themselves as the sparkling candidate of the new politics only to find that their freshness withers well before the balloting begins. Think John Anderson, Gary Hart, Ross Perot.

How can Obama avoid a similar fate?

"Novelty alone is not a criteria for success, nor should it be," he said in an interview on Wednesday as he walked through the hallways of the Senate. "I do think there are moments in American history where there are opportunities to change the language of politics or set the country's sights in a different place, and I think we're in one of those moments."

Then, after pausing for a moment, he added: "Whether I'm the person to help move that forward or somebody else is, is not for me to determine."

The biography and charisma of Obama, 45, has catapulted him into early prominence and sets him apart from the parade of former presidential hopefuls like Howard Dean, Perot, Jerry Brown and others who have challenged the status quo. But like them, he aspires to tap into a similar grassroots following even as he gains endorsements from the party's traditional kingmakers. *NYT*

Not even close: World falling behind on 2015 education goal

By David Alexander

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Thai grabs lead over Yu /A25

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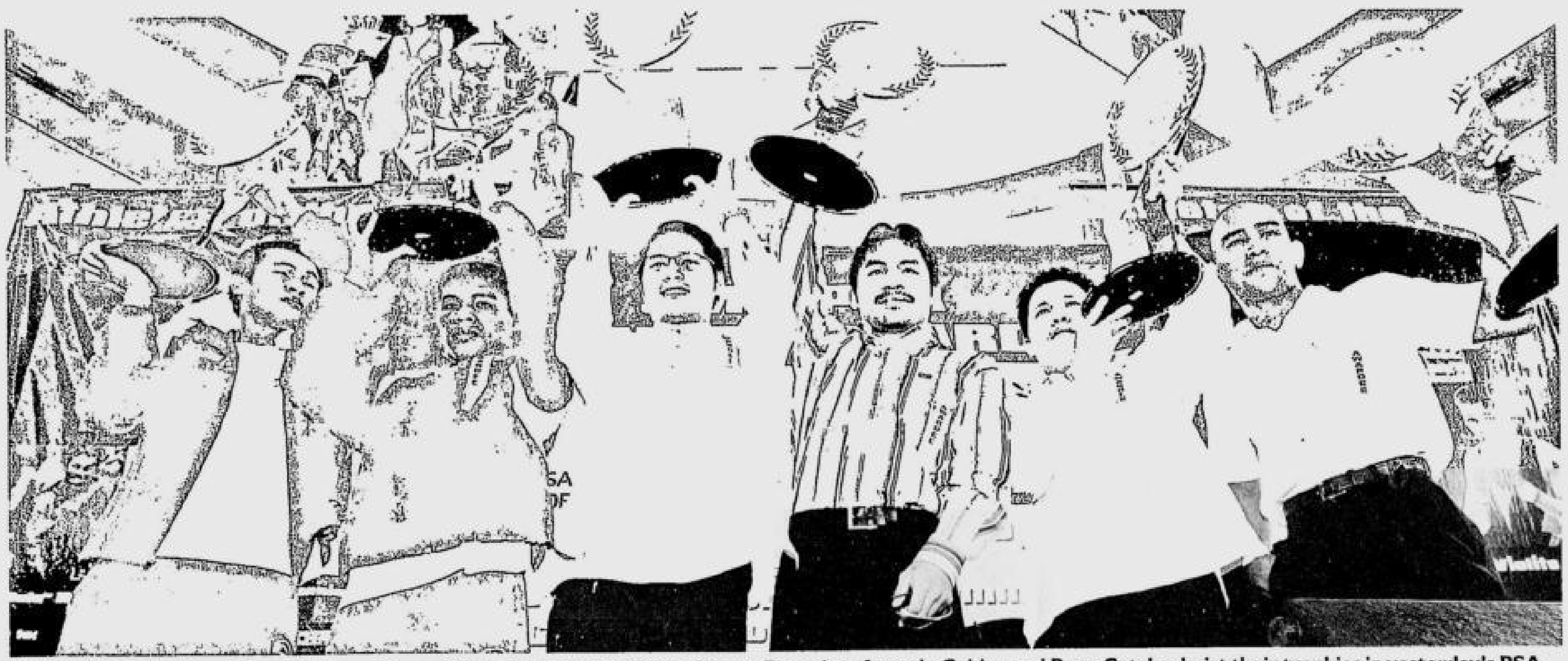

ATHLETES of the Year (from left) Joan Tipon, Violito Payla, Biboy Rivera, Manny Pacquiao, Antonio Gabica and Rene Catalan hoist their trophies in yesterday's PSA Annual Awards at the SM Mall of Asia. Ronato Alcano and Efren "Bata" Reyes, the two other awardees, are competing abroad. ERIK ARAZAS

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POC head bats for major changes to boost sports

By June Navarro

AMEND THE LAW THAT CREATED the Philippine Sports Commission and increase funding through horseracing revenues and financial aid from the legislative branch of the government.

These vital changes, according to Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., are needed for the country to gain a wide reach of international recognition in sports.

Cojuangco, the keynote speaker during yesterday's Philippine Sportswriters Association annual awards held at the Mall of Asia, stressed that the transformation should begin in no time.

"After 24 months in office, the present administration of the POC together with the officials of the PSC have discovered there is a need to make certain changes if we hope to continue the upgrading of our competitiveness in international sports," said Cojuangco.

"Our vision is not limited to the successful participation in 2008 (Beijing Olympics). We hope to establish a structure that will be able to continue this program of improvement until the Philippines can be rated among the top," he added.

For starters, the Olympic body yesterday filed through Rep. Renato Unico Jr. a bill amending and upgrading Republic Act 6847, the law that created the PSC, the government arm for sports.

Cojuangco said the first amendment is that commissioners of the PSC should be recommended by the POC. The former Tarlac representative also batted for PSC commissioners to have a fixed tenure of six years.

"Since the rationale behind RA 6847 was to create a body that can assist sports in the country, what could be better than having the people running this institution very well acquainted with the POC's programs," said Cojuangco.

"By having commissioners coming from the recommendees of the POC, we are assured of a harmonious relation between the two most important organizations in sports," he added.

Cojuangco added that fixing the term of the commissioners "assures some continuity in the PSC long-term program."

"We, however, would like to see their terms be staggered so that not all commissioners end their term at the same time," he stressed.

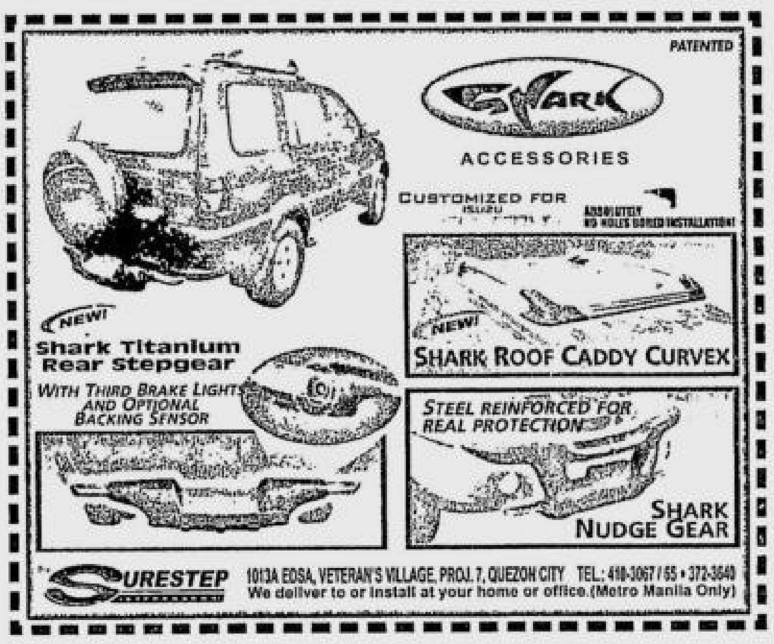
Yesterday's affair brought together the current toast of Philippine sports under one roof with eight Filipino sports greats led by boxing icon Manny Pacquiao getting the highest accolade from the sports print media.

The world's best pound-for-pound fighter was again crowned PSA Athlete of the Year but this time he shared the spotlight with a string of local heroes who also shone in the international scene last year.

Cue artists Efren "Bata" Reyes, Ronnie Alcano and Antonio Gabica joined Pacquiao in the Athlete of the Year podium along with amateur boxers Joan Tipon and Violito Payla, world champion bowler Biboy Rivera and wushu artist Rene Catalan.

COJUANGCO/ A26

COJUANGCO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Olympic drive needs experts

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TEAM PHILIPPINES WILL BE CALLING IN the "Sports Specialists" for the Beijing Olympic drive.

A new breed of sports medicine experts will be tapped to help prepare the national athletes honing up for the 2008 Beijing Games, according to Philippine Center of Sports Medicine director Dr. Jose Raul Canlas.

Aside from sports psychology, the national athletes will also undertake thorough examinations in kinesiology and physiology to maximize the athletes' potential in the Olympics gold medal quest.

The Philippine Sports Commission earlier this year called for more of these scientific aids, especially mind conditioning in the face of world class competitors the RP athletes are certain to encounter in the Olympics.

"We have been doing these before on a limited scale in selected sports disciplines," explained Canlas. "But now we have the go signal to widen the scope."

He said some athletes had "adverse reaction" to psychological exams, mistaking it as psychiatric cases.

Boxing, taekwondo and water polo were the only ones which wanted to avail of the psychological analysis, according to Canlas, but lately other sports are seeing its advantages.

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PBA quarterfinalists break deadlock today

By Musong R. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—DERRICK PUMAREN TALKED gladly about his Talk 'N Text squad finally playing to its true potential.

Red Bull's Yeng Guiao griped about his team still groping for form.

After two days of the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup quarterfinals, it seems both coaches are hard pressed for a repeat win today against their separate foes at the Ynares Center here.

GAMES TODAY
(Ynares Center)
4:35 p.m. – Red Bull vs. Sta. Lucia
7:20 p.m. – Purefoods vs. Talk 'N Text

Pumaren, for one, will be missing Jimmy Alapag in their 7:20 p.m. clash with Purefoods, a crippling development after his starting point guard was suspended for a game and ordered to pay P20,000 for fighting with Paul Artadi on Wednesday.

Guiao, meanwhile, continues to hope that his team would totally shake off the rust that slowed the Barako down in the last two games when they take on the Sta. Lucia Realtors in the 4:35 p.m. contest.

"I hope to see some more improvement in our game come Friday (today)," Guiao told the INQUIRER. "I'm happy that we leveled the series, who wouldn't be? But I still am not satisfied with the way we played.

"In the first game, we allowed them (Realtors) to lead by 28 points (after the first half)," Guiao said. "Tonight, it was only seven (at halftime). Hopefully, in Game 3, we wouldn't be surrendering the lead anymore."

Pumaren got career-high games from Anthony Washington and Yancy De Ocampo in a series-tying Game 2 win at the Cuneta Astrodome.

And much as he would like to have the momentum shift to his favor for this crucial third game, the soft-spoken coach knows that it would be an uphill climb all the way with Alapag out of the game.

"I hope we could keep the momentum on our side even if we don't have Jimmy," Pumaren said.

Talk 'N Text has an interesting piece of history going against it.

The Phone Pals have not won a best-of-five series after losing the series opener, and Pumaren would have to get something out of the second line of his backcourt today if he wants to avoid falling into a hole.

He would have to find someone who can keep the offense running smoothly even as the defending champion Chunkee Giants try to rebound from that loss with Kerby Raymundo and James Yap leading the way.

Incidentally, Marc Pingris is listed as a doubtful starter for Ryan Gregorio because of a fractured nose.

MARC Pingris of Purefoods foils Anthony Washington of Talk 'N Text in Game 2 of their PBA quarterfinal duel. RYAN LIM

Harbour Centre rules elims

HARBOUR CENTRE DISPATCHED Kettle Korn with relative ease yesterday, 103-77, and emerged as the No. 1 team at the end of the classification round of the 2007 PBL Silver Cup at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym in Manila.

With Reed Juntilla and Edwin Asoro scoring almost at will, the Port Masters took several 15-point leads late in the first quarter that set tone for the rout.

The Port Masters were especially hot in the third quarter as they stretched their 46-35 halftime advantage to 75-49 going into the final period—thanks to the creative plays of JC Intal.

The Port Masters actually finished the round tied with Mail & More, Toyota Otis and Hapee at 7-3 but emerged as the top qualifier due to their superior quotient.

The Teethmasters joined the four-team logjam at the top pack after downing Cebuana Lhuillier Pera Padala, 98-90.

Jason Castro fired a career-high 33 points—the most by any player this season—to lead Hapee's well-balanced attack.

The Moneymen, who finished tied with TeleTech at 4-6, sorely missed the services of top gunner Kenneth Bono who attended the PSA Awards Night to receive his Best Amateur cager trophy.

The Port Masters emerged as No. 1 by virtue of their plus-14 quotient. The Comets were second at plus-9, Hapee third at plus-4 and Toyota Otis fourth at minus-27.

In the playoffs, it will be Harbour against Toyota and Mail & More against Hapee. Both games will be played Tuesday after the first knockout phase between Magnolia and Kettle Korn.

The Port Masters shot impressively from the field and became the first team in a long, long while to produce more than 100 points. They made 43 of 77 tries for a high 56-percent shooting.

GAME TOMORROW
3:30 p.m.—Magnolia Ice Cream vs Kettle Korn

Ryan Araña typified Harbour's hot shooting as he finished with 21 points on a splendid 7-of-7 shooting from the 2-point region and 2-of-3 from the 3-point area. He also had six rebounds in 21 minutes of play for the Port Masters, who notched their fifth straight win.

"We're just peaking at the right time, I hope we can do better in the next round," said coach Jorge Gallent. "If we can play this kind of game, we have better chances."

The Port Masters, owned by youthful sportsman/businessman Mikee Romero, are gunning for a second straight championship after beating Toyota Otis in a classic title duel last year.

Intal, the hero of the team the past two games, tallied five points, three assists and three rebounds in 19 minutes of action.

The scores:

First Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 103—Araña 21, Juntilla 17, Asoro 13, Fernandez 11, Gaco 9, Capati 7, Raymundo 5, Williams 5, Intal 5, Lanete 4, Gamboa 2, Alonzo 2, Ortiguerra 0.

KETTLE KORN 77—Hubalde 20, Urbiztondo 14, Espiritu 13, Sierra 10, Cuan 6, Dela Cruz 4, Taylor 4, Canlas 4, Santos 2.

Quarters: 27-14; 46-35; 75-49; 103-77.

Second Game

HAPEE-PCU 98—Castro 33, Borboran 10, Rodriguez L. 10, Belga 9, Rodriguez J. 7, Butel 7, Bucao 7, Sanz 7, Hugnatan 6, Moreno 2, Larong 0.

CL PERA PADALA 90—Dela Cuesta 22, Kramer 20, Yee 15, Virado 13, Dulay 9, Oreta 5, Solis 2, Abadia 2, Escalona 2, Luanzon 0, Gonzales 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 26-19; 44-35; 71-67; 98-90.

High hopes for SBP's Fiba mission

A TOP PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE official expects the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas to score big in its mission to gain approval by the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) as the country's new cage body.

Led by business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the SBP delegation will try to convince Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann in a meeting at the Fiba headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, that the group is close to completing the process of forming a new unified body for the sport.

"The package that they (SBP officials) will be presenting is the package that Baumann wants," said POC chair Robert Aventajado.

Accompanied by PBA chair Ricky Vargas and commissioner Noli Eala, Pangilinan and Estrada hope to get a favorable reaction from Baumann that would lead to the lifting of the Fiba's suspension on the country.

The SBP, with Pangilinan as president and Estrada as chair, announced last week that it had fulfilled the requirements of the communique which officials of the Basketball Association of the Philippines and Pilipinas Basketball signed in the presence of Baumann in Tokyo, Japan, last September.

Under the agreement, a three-man panel originally composed of Pangilinan, BAP president Joey Lina and PB head Bernie Atienza crafted the constitution and bylaws of a unified basketball body which was eventually named as SBP.

To complete the unification process, the SBP will hold a national congress on Feb. 5 and submit the list of duly elected officers to the POC for recognition and the Fiba for the lifting of the country's suspension in international tournaments.

"Looking at it, I don't think you can come up with another group better than this one," said Aventajado of the SBP delegation.

"They (SBP officials) have the clout, political power, influence, money, expertise and following," said Aventajado. "Baumann can't ignore this group."

If the Fiba suspension is lifted, the SBP hopes to field a team in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) championship in Malaysia in May. *June Navarro*

Liem prevails; Mariano gains 4-man playoff

MARIANO

VIETNAMESE Grandmaster Le Quang Liem drew his last two matches against Filipinos to rule the 2007 Asian Zonal 3.3 Chess Championships at the Phu Quoc, Kien Giang province in Vietnam.

The 15-year-old Liem split the point with GM Nelson Mariano II after 14 moves of a Slav Duel in the eighth round Wednesday and then drew with National Master Nouri Hamed in the ninth and final round yesterday.

Liem finished with 7.5 points to clinch the title and earn one of the two slots for the World Championships.

Mariano, on the other hand, was held into a draw by FM Batchuluun Cegmed of Myanmar in the last round and settled for a four-man playoff for the last berth to the World Championships.

The 33-year-old ex-Asian junior titlist scored 6.0 points and will try his luck for the last seat against Vietnamese GMs Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, Dao Thien Hai and Nguyen Anh Dung via a single round-robin format.

The Viets downed Filipino campaigners for the last seat. Dao beat IM Darwin Laylo, Dung clobbered IM Oliver Dimakiling and Son nipped NM Oliver Barbosa.

Nouri, the best Filipino finisher in last year's International PGMA Cup, notched 5.5 points, the same output of GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. and IM Wesley So of the Philippines, GM Tu Hoang Thong and IM Bui Vinh of Vietnam and FM Batchuluun Cegmed of Myanmar. Filipino GMs Mark Paragua and Eugene Torre finished with 5.0 and 4.5, respectively. *Marlon Bernardino*

Davao player stuns Bitoon

CEBU CITY—UNHERALDED CARLO MAGNO Rosaupan pulled off the worthiest of three upsets, beating top seed IM Richard Bitoon in the second round of the 2007 Cong. Prospero Pichay Jr-Sinulog Open chess tournament at the Aznar Coliseum here Wednesday.

Rosaupan, a member of the Philippine Army based in Davao City, toppled Bitoon in a double-edged rook and bishop endgame to join IMs Chito Garma and Emmanuel Senador and 19 other players in the early lead in the nine-round tournament organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and Rose Pharmacy.

The 30th-seeded Rosaupan also won his first round match over Rommel Ganzon Wednesday.

Bitoon, the top seed with an Elo of 2416, beat Almer Banaria in the first round.

Sharing the limelight were local bet Peterson Sia, who stunned sixth seed NM Ernesto Fernandez; and Ibaryu Adante, who shocked 2006 Palawan Open champ NM Anthony Makinano.

Garma whipped Allen Talan in the first round and Joel Pacuribot in the second round, while Nadera bested Gemon Tolentino and Voltaire Sevillano. NM Mirabeau Maga also hurdled his fist two assignments over Jessie Marie Balbona and Allan Salientes to join the early lead.

Also posting back-to-back victories were six-time RP executive champion Dr. Jenny Mayor, NM Elias Lao, Rhobel Legaspi and Edmundo Gatus.

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POC clusters functions

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE is bound to divide its functions into five clusters and install them in such a way that the future generation of athletes and officials will reap its dividends.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said members of the Olympic body's executive board will spearhead the committees on games, athletes and coaches, finance, National Olympic Committee-POC management and Olympic values.

"This is part of the long-range program that the POC is trying to establish," said Cojuangco. "We'll always be ready even if there are no tournaments."

The concept of segregating the functions of the POC was broached by swimming's Mark Joseph culled from the International Olympic Committee model

But the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association chief was asked to improve his proposal after International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippine Frank Elizalde deemed the idea inapplicable to local standards.

"He (Elizalde) suggested that it's not a good idea to make a parallel setup with the IOC," said POC chair Robert Aventajado. "We don't have the manpower similar to the IOC."

Cojuangco explained that the committees would be in charge of their respective fields when it comes to the preparation of the national team in international events, particularly the Southeast Asian Games, Asian Games and the Olympics.

THAI Yupaporn Kawinpakorn fires record-tying 66. EDWIN BACASMAS

Thai grabs lead over Yu

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—THAI YUPAPORN KAWINPAKORN SIZZLED with a course-record tying six-under-par 66 yesterday to vault into a three-stroke lead with one round left in the ICTSI-Philippine Ladies Amateur championship at The Country Club here.

The petite and dusky Kawinpakorn was on attack mode all day, shooting four straight birdies on the front nine and opening her back-nine trip with an eagle 3 to end up with a 137 total after 36 holes.

Kathleen Uy, a 17-year-old Cebuana who is in the first semester of a mathematics course at the University of San Francisco, assembled a second straight 70 in tough windy conditions and stood second at 140.

Fil-American Cristina Corpus, who finished in the top 10 at Manila Golf last year, matched Uy's 70 and was third at 141, just four off the pace and still in solid contention.

Joint first-round leader Ainil Johani Abu Bakar of Malaysia struggled to a 73 to fall six shots behind at 143 in a tie with Indon Lidya Ivana Jaya, who had a 72.

The tournament is being held under the auspices of the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines with support coming from ICTSI, San Miguel, Pagcor, PSC, Electrobus/Callaway, Creative Synergy, Bostik, Banc of Commerce, TNT Express, Congressman Gilberto Duavit, Comworks and Jewelmer, Dottie Ardina, winner of six international titles last year, including the prestigious Junior World Championships in San Diego, and Mia Piccio both submitted 71s for 144.

Defending champion Debbie De Villa, out of it all after an 85 on Wednesday, struggled to another 85 as she bravely played despite flu-like symptoms caused by an unidentified viral infection.

Carmelette Villaroman, who came into this tournament as the hot favorite after running away with the match play Philippine Women's late last month, had a woeful 77 that left her out of it all with a 153 aggregate.

Yupaporn started her round with four straight pars, before picking up the pace in the next four with birdies coming from short putts.

After making the turn at 32, the Thai eagled the par-5 10th from the fringe to put herself in position to become the first foreign champion this decade.

Uy, on the other hand, bogeyed the same 10th hole after playing out of the leftside rough and missing the green. But she steadied herself by gunning down two birds in her last five holes, including one on the difficult 18th.

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Miñoza banners RP Open roster

KUALA LUMPUR—FILIPINO LEGEND Frankie Miñoza is definitely playing in the $300,000 Philippine Open from Feb. 1-4 where he will seek a second triumph in his home Open.

"We are delighted that Frankie Minoza has agreed to play in the Philippine Open next month," said Kyi Hla Han, executive chair of the Asian Tour.

"As one of Asia's greatest ever golfers, his contribution toward the game has been immense and I have every confidence that Frankie will enjoy a good showing in front of his home fans."

The 47-year-old Minoza, one of Asia's greatest players with multiple victories in the region and in Japan, claimed a popular home victory in 1998 and came close again in 2002 when he finished fourth.

But he stayed away from his country's national golf championship the last two years over differences with some officials of the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Miñoza will be among a strong local contingent at Wack Wack Golf and Country Club who will be determined to deliver a home triumph which has not been achieved since Felix (Casius) Casas' success in 2001.

Other top Filipinos who will throw in their challenge for the title include Juvic Pagunsan, last year's Asian Tour Rookie of the Year, Angelo Que and Gerald Rosales, winner of the event in 2000.

MIÑOZA

The super-cool Miñoza has won 14 times across the region, including six career titles on the Japan Golf Tour, in an impressive career dating back to the 1980s. He lost his card in Japan in 2004 but regained his confidence with some strong performances on the Asian Tour, thanks to a switch to the broomhandle putter which reaped its rewards.

He quickly regained his playing rights in Japan by finishing second in Qualifying School late in 2005 and has also supported the Asian Tour with 24 appearances over the past two seasons.

SPORTSWATCH

Xavier bounces back

DEFENDING CHAMPION XAVIER UNIVERSITY bounced back from an opening-day loss while Grace Christian High School began the season with a stunning victory after a winless season in the 31st Hitachi-Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball Association at the CKSC gym. The Xavier Stallions, who absorbed a stinging 62-69 loss to Chiang Kai Shek on opening day, posted a 63-50 victory over St. Stephen's High School in this seven-school league, featuring the top Fil-Chinese leagues in Metro Manila. Gabriel Banal led the Xavier charge with 15 points, 10 rebounds and 2 blocks that earned for him Player of the Game honors. Grace Christian, which lost all of its seven games last season, beat UNO High School, 66-62, in a marathon 2-hour, 10-minute game because of the 105 free throw attempts from both sides.

Sports nutrition talk

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FOREMOST SPORTS NUtritionists, Sanirose Orbeta, will deliver a special talk on "The Dieting Game: What Works and What Doesn't" which will touch on basic and sports nutrition, Syndrome X and BMI issues for the benefit of sports and fitness enthusiasts. The seminar is set on Feb. 1, 6 p.m., at the Balance Lifestyle Fitness Club at the 4/F, Discovery Suites, at 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center in Pasig. Club members include Anthony Suntay, Paolo and Suzi Abrera and Phoemela Barranda. Orbeta is a sports nutrition consultant of several PBA teams and national sports associations and boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao.

SJC Fastest Win today

MORE THAN 100 COCKERS AND HACKFIGHT ENthusiasts of Metro Manila clash today in San Juan Coliseum's Sama-Sama Grand Concierto Fastest Win event, with P100,000 at stake, beginning at 11 a.m. In a related development, 15 more participants signed up for the SJC 8-Cock International Derby, slated on Jan. 22, 24 and 26. Brothers Jerry and Ricoy Palmares of Iloilo, who will team up with Bobby Fairchild of Oklahoma, banner the list of yesterday's registrants. Fairchild is the owner of Clear Creek Gamefarms in Adair County. The list also includes two-time world champion William Go, 2007 NCA World Championship winners Arnold Mendoza and Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Mauro Prieto and Gov. Joel Reyes of Palawan, Reps. Gerry Espina, Butch Pichay and Conrad Estrella, Rudy Albano and Bebot Uy. Call 725-5369 and 725-6563.

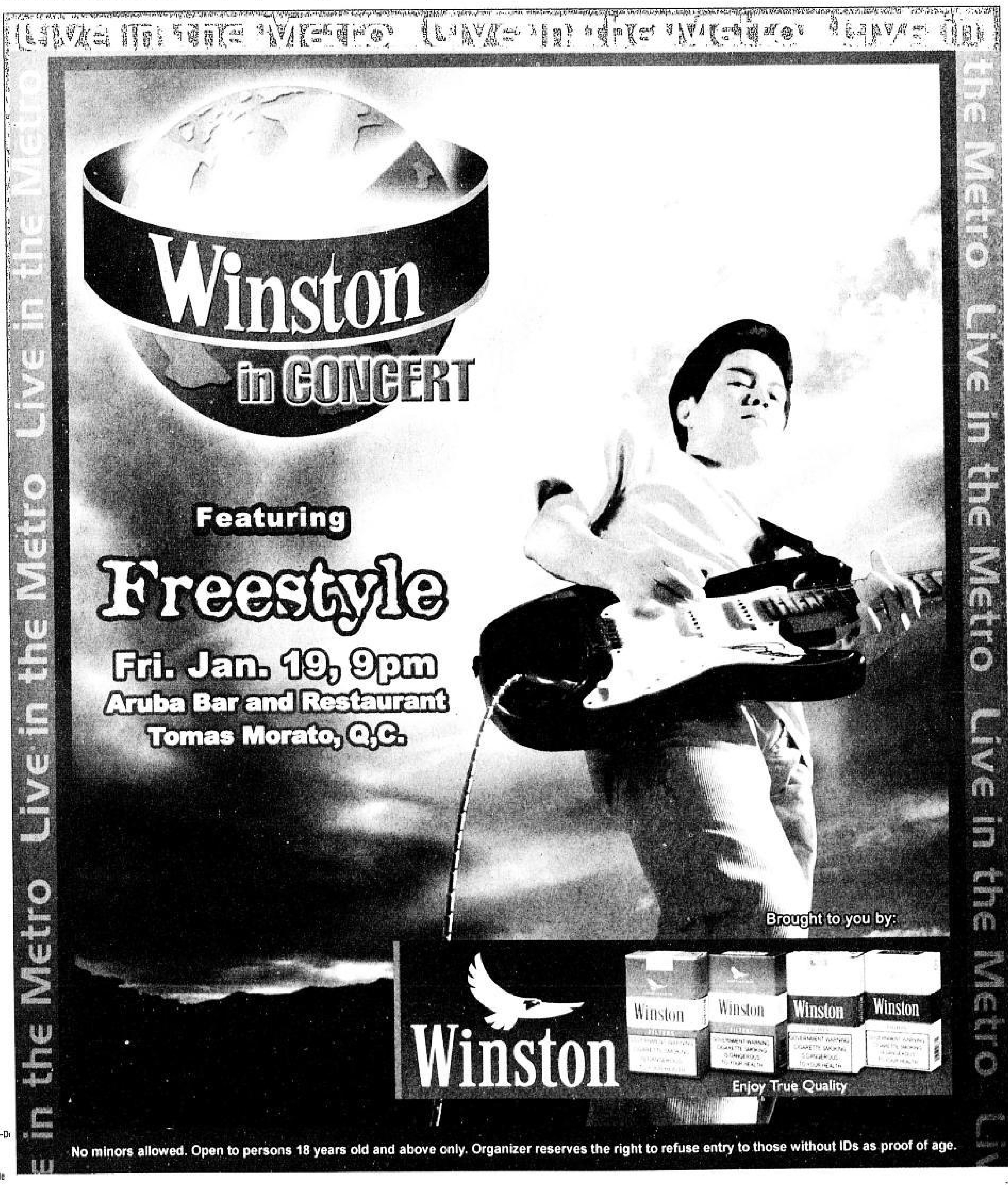
Pasay Cockers derby up

THE CROWD-DRAWING COCKFIGHT SERIES OF Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) returns at Pasay City Cockpit today via the big-time 5-cock derby. The first of more than 80 fights starts at 5 p.m. Veteran cocker-sportsman Tony Lasala, who topped the first PCCA derby last Jan. 5, heads the list of favorites that include Pol Estrellado, Tony Antonio, Ric de Guzman, Madlambayan Brothers, Dodie and Mamad Villarubio, Rey Briones, Pepito Ngo, Boy de Roca, Arman Santos and Joel Fernando. The participant with the highest points earned after the series (seven derbies) shall be declared the 2007 PCCA Cocker of the Year, said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. For details, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Zappy (3) Congreetly (2), Lovable Dolly (6), Kang Kang (8), Sweetsouthernsaint (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Glory and Honour (4), Dancing Polly (3), Royal Fleet (2), Sports Illustrated (6)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—U Are My Sunshine (7), Triple Threat (2), Idol (4), Arrivederci (8), Lyanjonik (5)
Race
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Sacred Hall (5), Regent Skipper (2), Dolock (1), Rough Red/Kirsten (7)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Reign of Fire (4), Loaded (5), Wing-Away (2), Ocean Dignity/Long Road
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Detective Daryll (6), Play It Again/Richie Rich (2), Sovereign Dancer (5), Yankee Clipper (7), Expiditer (3)
Race 7—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Arctic Desert (2), Rain Dancer (8), Toowoomba (7), Hickam (5), Big Spender (1), District Three (4)
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—Without Warning (1), Road Runner (5), Dona Gelay (3), Extreme Romance (4)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Golden Connection/Dalcross (1), Snowdipped/Odyssey Blue (8), mighty Mare (4), Lirao (5), Nice Legs (3), Flying Jojie



No minors allowed. Open to persons 18 years old and above only. Organizer reserves the right to refuse entry to those without IDs as proof of age.

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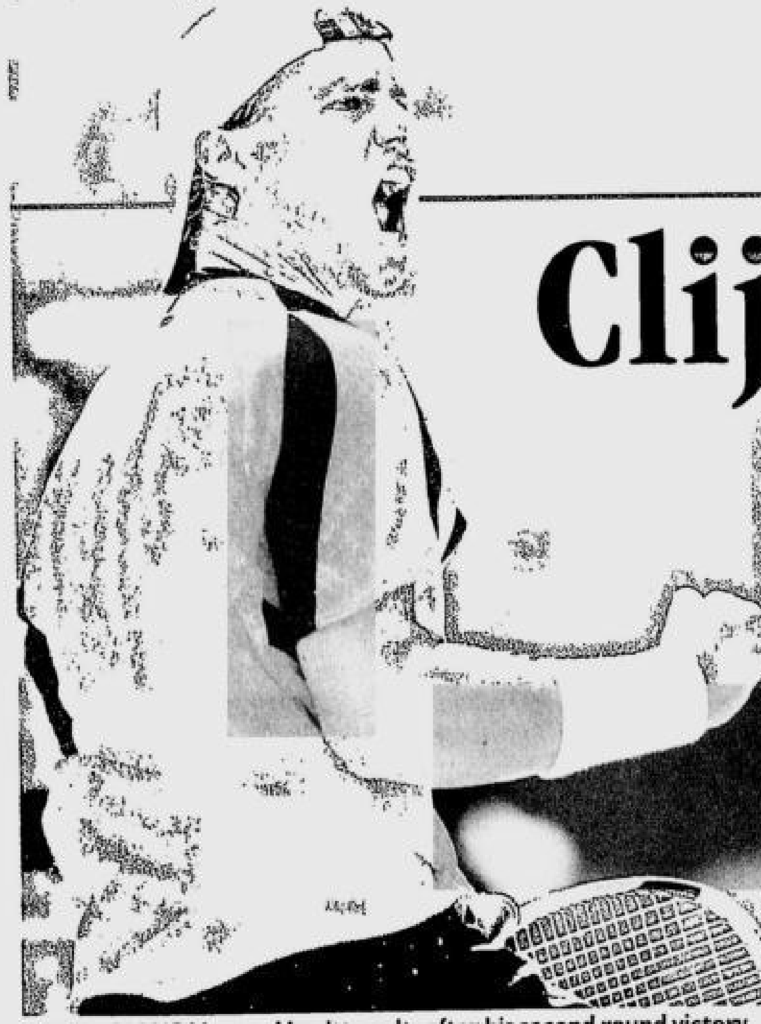
SPORTS



AUSTRALIA'S Lleyton Hewitt exults after his second round victory over Canada's Frank Dancevic, 6-4, 6-4, 3-6,6-4. AP

Clijsters, Hingis advance

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—COMING AT IT from different sides of retirement, Kim Clijsters and Martina Hingis raced each other into the third round of the Australian Open.

Clijsters extended the winning start to her farewell tour, beating Akiko Morigami 6-3, 6-0 in 59 minutes.

Joking that she and Clijsters were racing to finish their matches Thursday, Hingis continued to build momentum in her comeback after three years away with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Russian Alla Kudryavtseva.

After a shaky start, fifth-seeded James Blake gave 19-year-old hitting partner Alex Kuznetsov a 1-hour, 21-minute lesson in how to play at the majors with a 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 drubbing on Rod Laver Arena.

And Lleyton Hewitt, a 2005 finalist and Australia's best hope for a first homegrown champion since 1976, advanced 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 over Canada's Frank Dancevic. Hewitt had twice as many double faults (12-6), fewer winners (37-42) and more unforced errors (42-30).

The 23-year-old Clijsters, who has announced she is retiring at the end of this season in the hope of starting a family, recovered from an inconsistent opening set to run through the second.

She finished nine minutes faster than Hingis, who lost a little time when she was broken while serving for the match at 5-1.

Sixth-seeded Hingis won three straight Australian titles from 1997 and then lost three consecutive finals before quitting the tour because of nagging foot and ankle problems.

Hingis next meets Aiko Nakamura of Japan, a surprise 6-3, 6-2 winner over India's Sania Mirza.

In other women's matches, 12th-seeded Anna Chakvetadze beat Laura Granville 6-2, 5-7, 6-1. Also advancing were Vera Zvonareva, Alona Bondarenko, Tathiana Garbin and Australia's Alicia Molik. *AP*

HINGIS

Sampras enters Hall of Fame

WASHINGTON—AS A TENNIS HISTORY BUFF, Pete Sampras can't wait to walk around the sport's Hall of Fame when he goes there for the first time this summer.

He's especially looking forward to seeing his own plaque.

Sampras was elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Wednesday, joined in the 2007 class by Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Sven Davidson and Russ Adams.

"It's an honor to be included with (Rod) Laver and the older generation, (John) McEnroe and (Jimmy) Connors. All those guys," said Sampras.

Sampras has never visited the Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island, but he'll get a chance when he's there for the July 14 induction ceremony.

Thanks to a superb serve, dangerous forehand and big-match brilliance, the 35-year-old Sampras owns a record 14 men's singles Grand Slam championships and was ranked No. 1 for a record 286 weeks, including 102 in a row from April 1996 to March 1998. The man known as Pistol Pete won a total of 64 singles titles, including his haul of majors: seven at Wimbledon, five at the US Open and two at the Australian Open.

His singles record was 762-222, and he earned more than $43 million (Euro 33.3 million) in prize money, a mark that still stands.AP

PETE SAMPRAS

Allenby leads Hope Classic

LA QUINTA, CALIFORNIA—AUSTRALIAN Robert Allenby fired a nine-under 63 here Wednesday to seize a two-shot first round lead in the five million-dollar, five round Bob Hope Chrysler Classic.

Allenby, who began on the back nine at La Quinta Country Club, carded a 32 on his first nine holes that included a pair of putts of more than 20 feet.

Allenby went on to complete his bogey-free round with birdies on four of his last five holes.

He held a two-shot lead over Americans Mark Calcavecchia and Craig Kanada, both of whom played without a bogey en route to their 65s.

The start of the five-round event was delayed by frost on all four of the desert courses used in the event, which features professionals playing with amateurs and celebrities.

All four courses had a delay of at least half an hour. *AFP*

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Jazz get back rhythm

DETROIT—THE UTAH JAZZ SNAPPED their longest losing streak of the season and spoiled Chris Webber's Detroit debut with a 100-99 victory over the Pistons on Wednesday.

Deron Williams hit a three-pointer with 44 seconds left for the winning points to cap a career-best night for the Jazz, who improved to 25-14 after snapping a four-game losing run.

The Pistons had a final chance to win the game following a timeout with 5.1 seconds left, but Chauncey Billups, who returned to the Detroit line-up after sitting out eight games with a calf injury, missed a three-pointer at the buzzer.

The Jazz are 4-0 against the Pistons over the past two seasons, as Detroit (21-16) lost for the fifth time in six games.

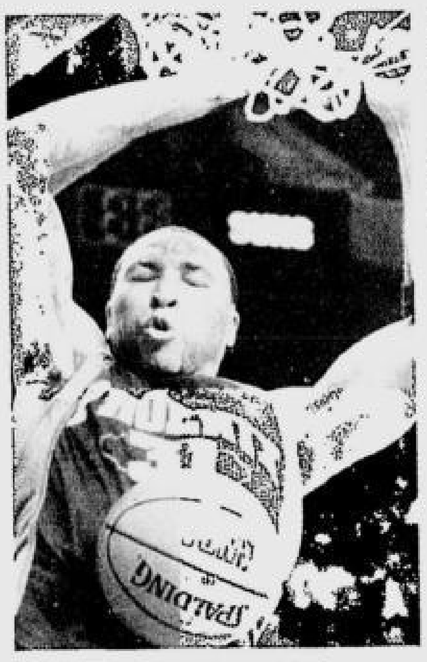
Waived by the Philadelphia 76ers last week, Webber joined up with his new team mates just in time for morning practice and made his debut on the floor with 10:07 left in the first half to a standing ovation.

Playing his first game since Dec. 27, Detroit-born Webber managed just two points, five rebounds and three assists in his 17 minutes.

Williams led Utah with 31 points and 10 assists. Mehmet Okur added 22 points and Carlos Boozer chipped in with 20 points, nine rebounds and six assists.

Steve Nash had 21 points and 14 assists as the Phoenix Suns won their 11th straight game, beating the Houston Rockets, 100-91.

Vince Carter had 26 points as the New Jersey Nets beat the Charlotte Bobcats, 92-85. Jason Kidd had 17 points for the Nets, who have won seven of their last nine games. Reuters



PHOENIX Suns' Shawn Marion

Complete Results:

Toronto 101, Sacramento 85; Washington 99, NY Knicks 98;New Jersey 92, Charlotte 85; Utah 100, Detroit 99; Chicago 99, Milwaukee 90; Memphis 118, Philadelphia 102; Atlanta 105, Minnesota 88; Phoenix 100, Houston 91; LA Lakers 100, San Antonio 96; Portland 94, Cleveland 76; LA Clippers 115, Golden State 109

Cojuangco...

From page A23

RIVERA

Gabica, Tipon, Payla and Catalan won gold medals in the last Asian Games.

Cojuangco said the PSC should be elevated to a level that would entitle the chairman to attend cabinet meetings. Under the present setup, sports do not have a direct voice in the Presidential cabinet.

The POC chief is also seeking additional funding from horseracing. When the law on horseracing was passed, the races were held only thrice a week. Now, races are held almost daily.

"We are also going to request that in the GAA (general appropriations act), congressmen and senators should allocate some of their so-called 'pork barrel' for sports," said Cojuangco.

"There are many others that we intend to bring to the attention of our legislators like the incentives act," he added.

The Olympic body will also ask the government to make the acquisition of sports equipment by the national sports associations tax-free.

"I sincerely believe that if we can have these amendments approved, the target of raising our level of competitiveness in world sports can be easily achieved," said Cojuangco.

"I hope and pray that the unity and concerted effort shown by all sports-loving Filipinos this past two years will not only continue to prevail but will also involve all Filipinos in or out of sports," Cojuangco added.

Pacman-Barrera sure—Sulaiman

A REMATCH BETWEEN FILIPINO superstar Manny Pacquiao and Mexican champion Marco Antonio Barrera will definitely happen because both fighters want the fight.

No date has been set but World Boxing Council (WBC) president Jose Sulaiman told reporters in an interview at his WBC office in Mexico City that the eagerly awaited confrontation "will take place."

"Let me tell you, Mexicans want Pacquiao. They don't want anyone else in the world. And the Philippines wants Barrera," said Sulaiman according to Boxingscene.

The WBC top honcho said Pacquiao's promotional woes derailed the proposed mandatory Barrera defense of his super featherweight title against Pacquiao following the Filipino's victory over Erik Morales last November.

"This is a puzzle (the promotion issue) that not even money has been able to resolve, so we took the only step that could be taken. We authorized Barrera to make a voluntary defense of his world title, and Pacquiao to make a voluntary defense of his International title," Sulaiman said.

"Once those fights have been held, and hopefully the court will have a ruling about the law suit between Golden Boy and Top Rank in three or four months then the WBC will proceed with a purse offer," Sulaiman added.

Barrera is slated to defend his WBC title against fellow Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez on March 17 while Pacquiao will defend his WBC International belt against South Korean In Jin Chi on April 28 in Macau, China.

Barrera, stopped by Pacquiao in 11 rounds of their non-title clash in 2003 in Texas, is expected to have his hands full against Marquez, while Pacquiao is heavily favored over Chi.

Marquez is the same fellow Pacquiao knocked down three times in the first round before escaping with a draw in his defense of the WBA and IBF super featherweight titles against the Filipino in 2004.

Sulaiman described Pacquiao as "a rhino, who can knock down a ten foot wall with his punches and determination" but added that "Marco is a highly intelligent, courageous and good boxer. So it's going to be a very, very, very good fight." *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

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- **Public sector deficit** down to P7B from P71B /B8

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Shares close just shy of decade-long high

Market looks ahead, expecting strong corporate results for '06

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY ROSE 1.32 PERCENT TO close just shy of a 10-year high, as investors took cheer from an increasingly positive economic outlook, dealers said.

They said buyers returned after a modest downturn Wednesday, although some profit-taking hit property stocks, with the market looking ahead to what are expected to be strong corporate results for 2006.

The composite index added 40.17 points to 3,081.73, off the day's high of 3,090.73 and a low of 3,043.25. This was the index's best finish since April 3, 1997, when the market settled at 3,104.77.

The broader all-share index rose 21.05 points to 1,928.54.

There were 76 gainers and 34 losers, with 52 stocks unchanged. Turnover was P3.87 billion ($79.2 million).

"The upsurge is still being driven by optimism about prospects for sustainable economic growth despite lower-than-expected (gains) in the agriculture sector last year," said Chelsea Dipasupil of RCBC Securities.

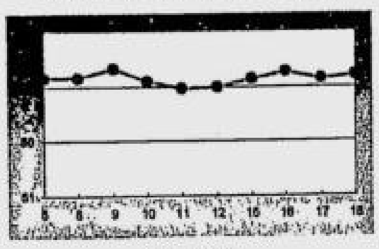
Prakash Sakpal, ING economist, said growth in 2006 could hit the lower end of the government's 5.5-6.1 percent target range despite the slowdown in agriculture and exports in the three months to December.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap ex-

SHARES/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



JANUARY

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₱48.79 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2007

¥121.28 = $1

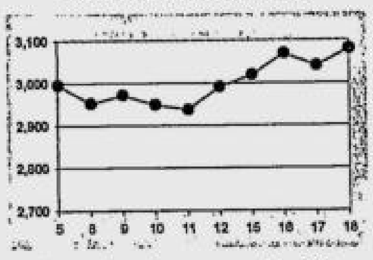
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2007

GOLD: $632.70-633.20

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 18, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Ayala unit sells Singapore mall stake for ₱1.49B

By Daxim L. Lucas

A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF AYALA Corp. has sold its stake in a Singaporean holding firm which owns and operates a real estate project in the city state's priciest commercial district.

The sale effectively frees up capital, which the country's largest conglomerate can use for other investments in the future.

In a statement to the stock exchange, Ayala Corp. said that that Ayala International Holdings Ltd. (AIHL) has entered into a sale and purchase agreement with Hotel Properties Ltd. (HPL) for the sale of its 23.3 percent interest in Hermill Investments Pte Ltd.

The deal was valued at 47 million Singapore dollars, or about P1.49 billion at prevailing exchange rates.

HPL is a Singapore-listed company, which currently owns 59 percent of Hermill, the holding company for The Forum Shopping Mall, a 17-story, retail-cum-office development along Orchard Road in Singapore.

AIHL is a subsidiary of Ayala International Pte Ltd. which, in turn, is a 100-percent owned subsidiary of Ayala Corp.

"This move allows Ayala International, the international arm of the Ayala Group, to realize values and recycle capital to other investment opportunities going forward," according to the firm's chief finance officer Rufino Luis T. Manotok.

The deal marks the second major investment move in as many weeks for Ayala Corp., a 172-year-old conglomerate, whose other interests include Ayala Land Inc., Globe Telecoms and the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

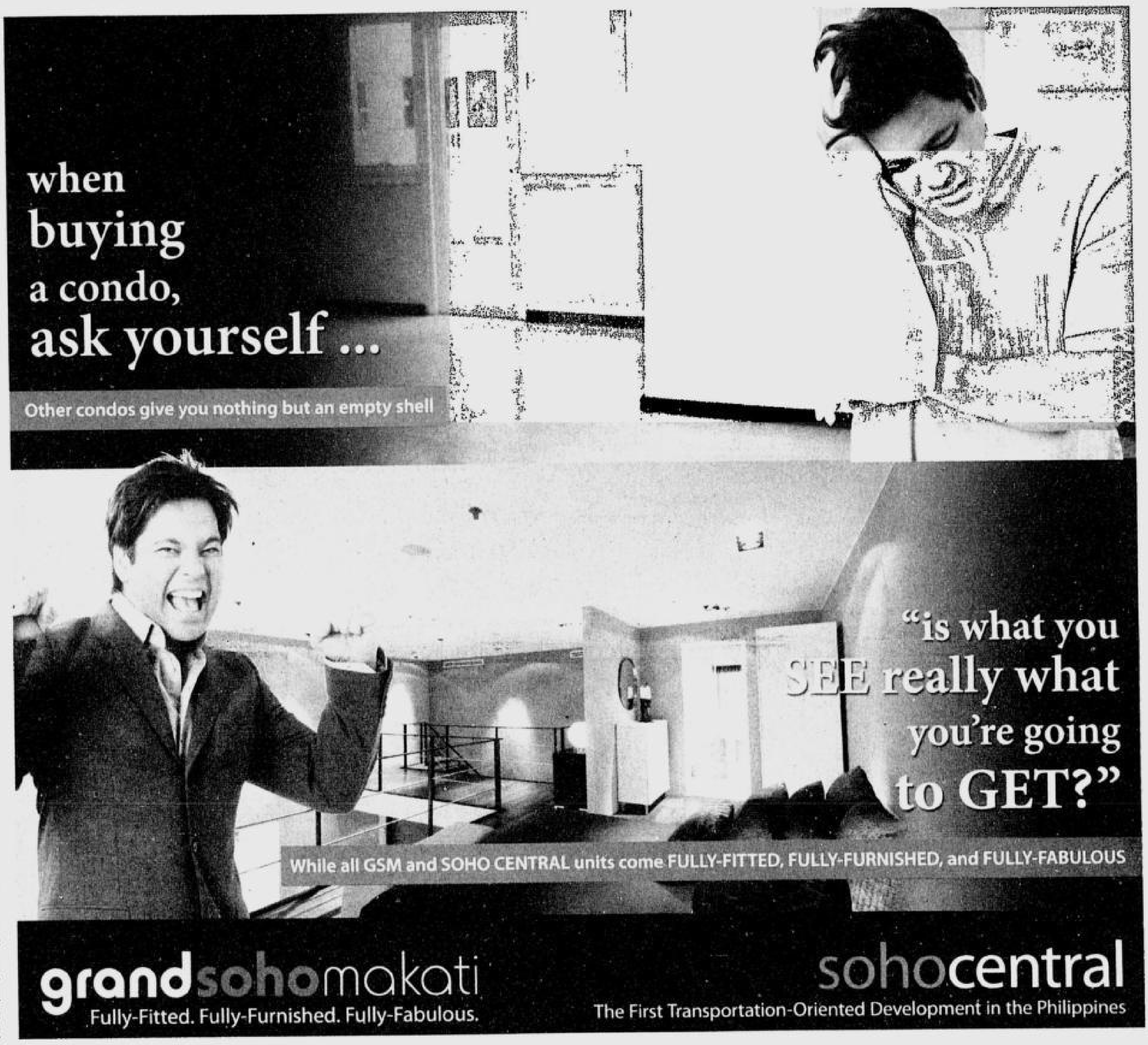
Last week, Leveit Solutions, the holding unit for Ayala Corp.'s investments in the business process outsourcing sector, acquired 100 percent of Affinity Express Inc. of the US for $28 million.

Leveit bought the stakes held in Affinity Express by US investment funds Flagship Ventures, Hercules Technology Growth Capital Inc., Ticonderoga Capital, and Coop Securities Inc.

Affinity Express, a business process outsourcing company, has over 3,000 customers around the world.

The firm provides graphics and design services to several industries, including the newspaper, direct mailing and quick printing industries.

Shares of Ayala Corp. slid lower by P15 on the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday at P595 apiece. Trading was heaving, amid a bullish market, with P127 million worth of the company's shares changing hands.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All other condo projects sugarcoat the deal with promises of fancy model units fashioned by big-name interior designers. But come turnover time, the real deal is revealed – an empty unit, with the most primitive of fittings and furnishings, if any at all.

Century Properties, the creators of the award-winning **Essensa East Forbes** now offers the last remaining choice units of the highly acclaimed **Grand Soho Makati (GSM)** and **Soho Central in Ortigas.**

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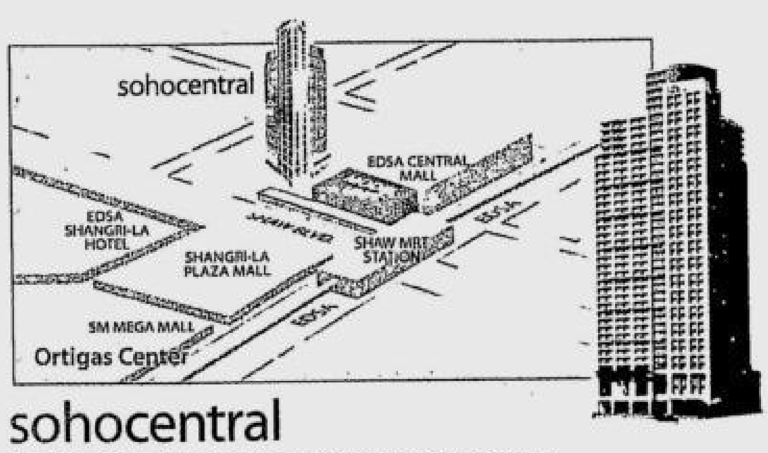

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RP, Brunei eyeing E. Timor oil, gas

Planned joint venture to undertake exploration, development projects

By Abigail L. Ho

BRUNEI AND THE PHILIPPINES HAVE agreed to jointly undertake oil and gas exploration projects in East Timor, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

In a briefing yesterday, Lotilla said preliminary discussions on this were held with the energy minister of Brunei during the recently concluded Asean Summit in Cebu, but details of the partnership had yet to be fleshed out.

He said a group would be formed to work out the details of the project, including the feasibility study and the timetable.

"East Timor has one of the richest deposits of oil and gas in the region. And if the country gains an opportunity to explore those resources, then we will be able to help each other," he said. "I think their openness is because they want to diversify the countries with which they have partnerships."

Before the project could start, however, East Timor had to determine what petroleum blocks it could offer for exploration and development and what terms and conditions would govern such projects, Lotilla said.

Also, the energy secretary said the country was looking at getting natural gas from East Timor, as the country's indigenous natural gas supply was good for only 25 years for a maximum of 3,000 megawatts of power.

"We have to think long term. President Arroyo urged us to think beyond the 25-year period. If we are to have cleaner sources of power, then we have to intensify our domestic oil and gas exploration," he said.

Unless another Malampaya gas reservoir is found, he said the country should look at alternative sources of natural gas.

As proof of East Timor's rich oil and gas reserves, he said the country received an average of $100 million a month from Australia for its natural gas.

Philippine National Oil Co. and Brunei National Petroleum Co. (PetroleumBrunei) had agreed to forge an agreement to pursue partnerships in the fields of renewable energy and human resource development.

Cebu Holdings sees strong growth in '07

By Daxim L. Lucas

AN AFFILIATE OF AYALA LAND INC. DEDICATED to developing real estate projects in Cebu yesterday unveiled plans to further expand its flagship mall.

At the same time, Cebu Holdings Inc. (CHI) reported a sharp increase in its unaudited net income for 2006 due to strong rental income and real estate sales in Cebu City.

In a statement to the stock exchange, CHI president Francis O. Monera said the firm ended 2006 with a P207-million profit, representing a 76-percent increase from year-ago's P117 million.

Revenues as of December 2006 stood at P1.04 billion, 51 percent higher than the previous year's P690 million.

CHI said it had a "strong roster" of projects for 2007, which is expected to sustain its impressive performance in the previous year.

It said Ayala Center Cebu, the centerpiece of CHI's Cebu Business Park project, remained the "preferred regional mall." Its expansion building, which is set to add another 6,000 square meters of leasable space, started construction in June of 2006 and is set to be completed by the first quarter of the year.

"This year, CHI will start the construction for the mall's lagoon area redevelopment , which will add more than 8,000 square meters of leasable area," Monera said.

Sale of residential lots at CHI's newest seaside subdivision, Amara, was also a major contributor to the company's income in 2006.

The second phase of the project was well received by the market with only eight remaining lots unsold as of yearend.

Landbank loans to micro projects hit ₱16B in '06

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES EXTENDED last year P16 billion worth of loans for the financing of micro agricultural projects of more than 340,000 small farmers and fisherfolk nationwide.

"Since it has always been our fervent desire to enable more of our countrymen to cross the poverty threshold, we have mobilized our government financial institutions, agencies and corporations to help bring the fruits of a strong and effective microfinance program closer to our people," Landbank president and CEO Gilda Pico said.

The bank also released some P2.1 billion to other micro-enterprises through its conduits that included People's Credit and Finance Corp., Philippine Business for Social Progress, non-government organizations and other MFIs.

"These resulted in the creation of more than 175,000 jobs nationwide," Pico said.

For 2007, Landbank committed to increase releases for micro-agricultural projects to P17 billion.

₱280-M export fund created

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUT UP A P280-million export promotion fund to boost the competitiveness of local exporters, which has been adversely affected by the continued strengthening of the peso.

In a press statement yesterday, the government said the seed fund for the facility would come from the following state agencies: the Department of Trade and Industry (P100 million), Department of Budget and Management (P100 million), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (P50 million), and National Economic and Development Authority, representing the national government as owner of the Industrial Guarantee and Loan Fund (P20 million).

As the export fund was envisioned to be a public-private sector project, the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. has also committed to sink in P10 million.

A memorandum of agreement was signed yesterday between the Export Development Council and the initial contributors to the fund.

"The EPF will provide supplemental financing to projects that are expected to promote growth of the export sector and provide opportunities for job creation," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

"These projects should be sustainable and focused on capacity-building, product design, market research and publication, country image building and support services directed toward enhancing the competitiveness of Philippine exporters, Tetangco added.

An EPF committee, to be composed of senior officials principally from the contributing entities, will be created to review and act on proposals for funding assistance. It will also evaluate the actual use of the funds.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, also a member of the Monetary Board, had strongly pushed for the creation of this fund.

He had said that since the peso was likely to remain strong for the long haul, the country "must come up with an honest-to-goodness export development fund and export upgrading fund to improve quality, design and packaging and help us market abroad more aggressively and to have more (trade) exhibitions and fairs."

China Bank ties up with Manulife

RETAIL TYCOON HENRY SY'S CHINA BANKing Corp. has teamed up with global insurance giant Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. (Manulife) to set up a bancassurance business in the Philippines.

The two companies announced their joint venture through a new company targeted to start operations in the first quarter of this year. Chinabank will have a 5-percent stake in the new unit while Manulife will own the rest.

Bancassurance, or the selling of life insurance products to bank clients, started in the Philippines seven years ago. But for a bank to be allowed to sell insurance, it has to own at least 5 percent of the company whose products the bank is selling.

An extensive portfolio of innovative insurance and financial products for health, wealth and education will be offered at all China Bank branches in the country, the bank disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Doris C. Dumlao

Shares . . .

From page B1

pects the farm sector to recover this year with a projected growth of between four and five percent, compared to 3.88 percent in 2006.

On Friday, the government announced a higher overall growth forecast for this year, revising up its estimate to 6.1-6.7 percent from 5.7-6.5 percent given Congress' likely approval of the proposed budget for 2007 and a strong peso.

The economy grew 5.0 percent in 2005.

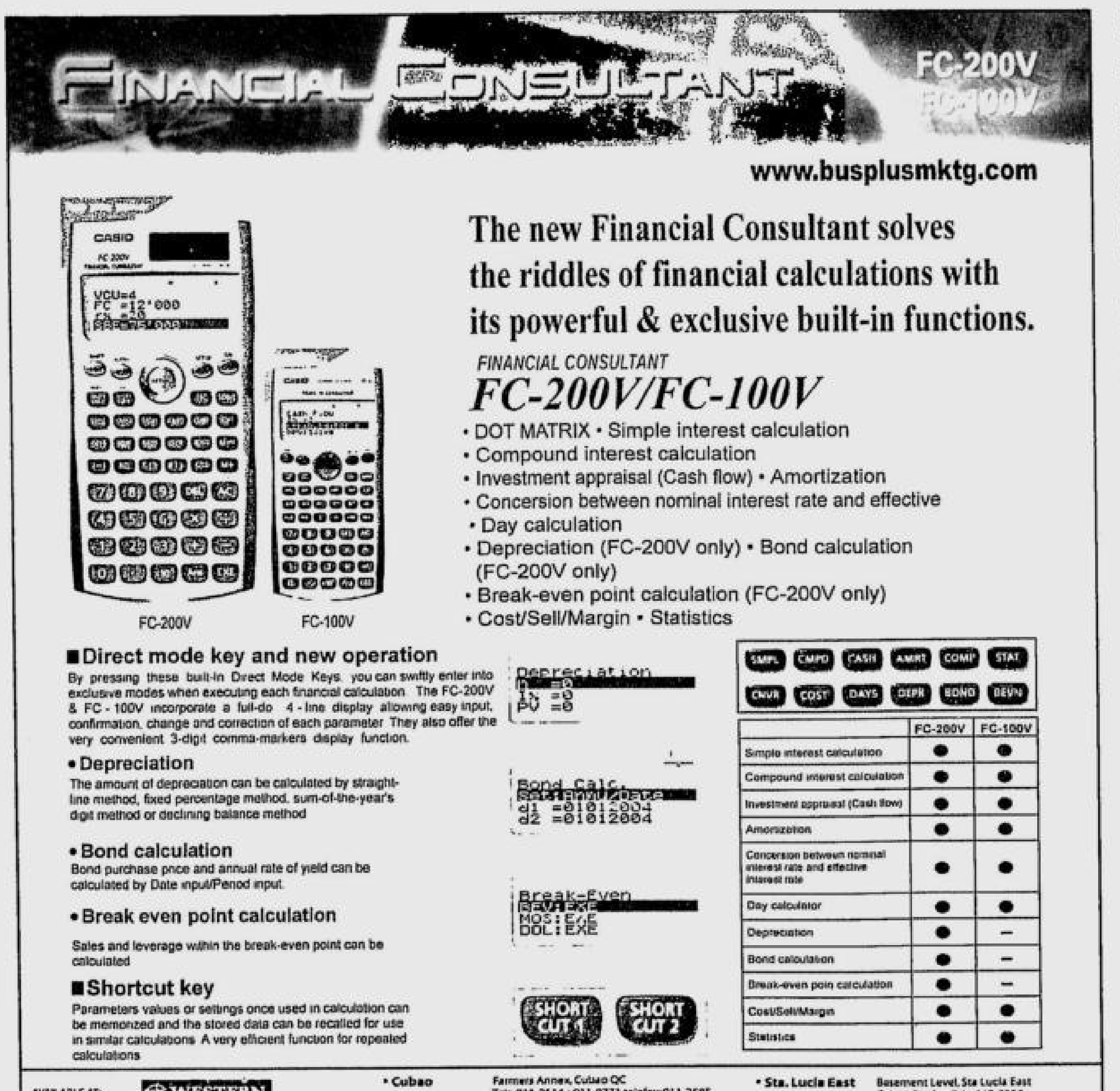
Also, developments in the local stock market tracked the trend in the region. Yesterday, the Singapore and Malaysian bourses also marked milestones in trading. *(See story on Page B4.)*

Philippine Long Distance Telephone jumped P85 to P2,490 while rival Globe Telecom advanced P55 to P1,275.

Top-traded Metropolitan Bank extended its rally, gaining another peso to P57.50.

Ayala Land fell 50 centavos to P15.75.

San Miguel A shares retreated 50 centavos to P63.50, while its B shares dropped one peso to P75. *AFP, Reuters*



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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 18, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.2	68,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46	46	45.5	46	2,084,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68	69	68	68.5	629,400
China Banking Corp.	690	690	685	685	6,180
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	4,110,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	82	82.5	82	82.5	30,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	57	58	56.5	57.5	7,306,200
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	49	49	49	500
Philippine National Bank	47	47.5	47	47.5	265,100
Phil. Savings Bank	49	49	49	49	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	30	30.5	30	30.5	505,700
Security Bank Corp.	68	68.5	68	68.5	69,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	54	54.5	54	54	5,200
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	300,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.85	186,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	2,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	37,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	300	320	300	305	17,150
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2020	2020	2020	2020	100
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.62	1,821,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.1	5.5	5.1	5.4	61,550,000
First Gen Corp.	56	58	56	57.5	1,831,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	73.5	75.5	73.5	74.5	848,000
Manila Electric Co. A	62	65	62	64.5	484,600
Manila Electric Co. B	62	66	62	66	1,445,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.4	3,943,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	6,410,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	625,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21	21	21	51,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	43	41.5	43	1,046,000
RFM Corp.	1.28	1.32	1.28	1.28	953,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	85,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	960,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	63.5	112,200
San Miguel Corp. B	76	76	75	75	127,900
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.18	2.1	2.12	3,736,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.25	19.25	18.75	19	3,472,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.24	1.28	1.24	1.28	12,004,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.1	4.1	366,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.2	8	8.2	264,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	103,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	2,157,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.62	150,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.76	0.77	0.74	0.74	43,920,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.22	0.235	0.22	0.225	23,790,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	171,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	600	600	590	595	213,450
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	180,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	9.3	9.3	8.9	9	2,094,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0825	0.0925	0.08	0.085	219,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	3.05	2.9	3	1,004,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	11,070,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.013	1,992,300,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	801,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	10,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	68,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	9,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.8	40,683,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7	7.3	7	7.2	1,603,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.5	1,484,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.26	2.3	2.26	2.3	995,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.25	11.75	2,151,700
Medco Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	300,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.38	400,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.95	543,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.06	2.12	2.02	2.06	10,053,000
Pacifica	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	104,500,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	50,000
Solid Group Inc	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	1,430,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	4,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	347.5	347.5	345	347.5	653,900
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	150,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.7	344,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	11,960,000
Wellex Industries Inc	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.145	3,770,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.25	15.75	15.75	13,102,100
Belle Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	5,265,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.68	349,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	506,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	1,080,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.45	3.6	3.45	3.6	596,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.72	1.76	1.7	1.72	781,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	540,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.67	22,780,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	246,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0675	0.0725	0.0675	0.07	14,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.64	51,242,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.17	1,890,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.15	0.175	0.14	0.175	2,080,000
Interport Res.	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	11,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	20,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.53	1,830,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.82	2,410,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	1,300,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.019	1,900,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.34	2.38	2.34	2.36	36,176,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	60,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	210,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.5	8,892,900
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.71	0.72	0.69	0.71	10,780,000
SM Development Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	912,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	12	8,623,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.6	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	810,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20.5	20	20.5	77,500
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	2	1.96	2	12,778,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1220	1275	1215	1275	125,780
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	8,746,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2405	2505	2405	2490	141,270
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,770,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	5,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.48	2.5	2.48	2.5	227,000
IPVG Corp.	3.9	4	3.9	4	499,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.055	0.0625	0.055	0.0625	30,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	44,800,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.48	2.5	2.46	2.46	248,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.034	565,300,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4	4.1	4	4.1	139,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	450,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	23.5	24	23.5	23.75	916,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	150,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.14	2.16	2.14	2.14	343,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	780,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	1,000
Far Eastern University	800	800	800	800	150
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	80,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	104,000
Paxys Inc	20.75	20.75	20.5	20.5	157,500
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	4.8	5	989,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.4	5	5	1,594,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	176,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.2	839,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	10,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	87,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	42,210,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	6,850,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.028	0.026	0.027	2,404,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.031	0.028	0.031	1,339,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	101,700,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.55	3.6	25,250,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	302,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.71	1,800,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.44	1.56	1.44	1.52	9,451,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	7,790,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	88,400,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.06	1,933,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.06	913,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	11	11	10.75	10.75	74,900

CURRENCIES

January 18, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.772738	1.000000	48.7990
Japan	Yen	0.006408	0.008293	0.4047
United Kingdom	Pound	1.522371	1.970100	96.1389
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099017	0.128138	6.2530
Switzerland	Franc	0.619578	0.801796	39.1268
Canada	Dollar	0.659164	0.853024	41.6267
Singapore	Dollar	0.502430	0.650195	31.7289
Australia	Dollar	0.607546	0.786225	38.3670
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.049648	2.652450	129.4369
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206009	0.266596	13.0096
Brunei	Dollar	0.500802	0.648088	31.6260
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021645	0.028011	1.3669
UAE	Dirham	0.210400	0.272279	13.2869
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.294100	63.1508
Korea	Won	0.000825	0.001068	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099400	0.128634	6.2772
Argentina	Peso	0.251134	0.324992	15.8593
Brazil	Real	0.362413	0.468999	22.8867
Denmark	Kroner	0.134202	0.173671	8.4750
India	Rupee	0.017526	0.022681	1.1068
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220782	0.285714	13.9426
Mexico	New Peso	0.070605	0.091370	4.4588
New Zealand	Dollar	0.533953	0.690989	33.7196
South Africa	Rand	0.108075	0.139860	6.8250
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023593	0.030532	1.4899

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Jan. 17, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Jan. 17, 2007

BSP expected to keep key policy rates steady

Not keen on monetary easing until after May polls

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas is not likely to rush any monetary easing until after the May elections when political risks have subsided, a top BSP official said.

The official explained that despite the downtrend in the inflation, the BSP would have to remain cautious of other risks to price stability, especially with the uncertainties arising from the May elections.

"I doubt it because there are still some remaining risks," said the official when asked if a cut in the BSP's overnight rates were possible in the coming months.

He said the revival of the tiering system last November had slashed local short-term interest rates by 200 basis points and, as such, there was no need to rush any outright cut in overnight rates.

Tiering is a system where the BSP pays a lower rate on short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels. This is to encourage banks to lend out their funds, instead of depositing them in the BSP.

Analysts also see the forthcoming elections as a "key risk" for the country this year.

"The elections may play a critical role in shaping future government policy making and test President Arroyo's ability to deflect impeachment calls from the opposition and other vested interest groups," British bank HSBC said in a recent report.

In the meantime, UBS Investment Research said that monetary policy, along with banks' risk asset shifts, "should remain relatively unchanged at least until the election."

UBS economist Philip Wyatt said two factors were behind today's easier monetary policy: the cut in policy rates via a tiering system and the BSP's purchases of foreign exchange given a strong balance of payments position.

"Recent BSP comments on the need for greater interest rate flexibility plus the monetary acceleration prompt us to expect some kind of adjustment in the existing policy rate system. The clearest policy option would be to abandon the tiering system and to simply cut the benchmark rate," Wyatt said.

With inflation trending down to 4.3 percent in December, the 91-day T-bill yield had further dropped to below 4 percent.

Peso seen at 50 to $1 during election season

By Michelle V. Remo

AFTER HITTING SIX-YEAR HIGHS, the peso is expected to correct and drop to 50 to a US dollar in view of the May elections.

According to UBS Investment Research, the uncertain economic environment during election seasons would create some slight changes in the country's macroeconomic fundamentals.

Government spending normally rises during election seasons, creating some adverse effects on a country's fiscal position, UBS said.

It said interest rates could possibly rise from their extremely low levels, but would again decline after the election.

"In the weeks ahead the local yield curve will likely shift upwards and flatten after the election," UBS said in its latest paper on the Philippine economy.

"The flattening curve will likely lead to a knock-on short term correction in the peso-dollar rate toward 50 to $1 on a three-month horizon," UBS added.

A drop in interest rate makes local debt papers less attractive to foreign investors, therefore shifting investments away from the domestic market. This will drag down the value of the local currency.

However, UBS said the peso correction and the higher government spending due to the elections would not cause any instability.

"The May elections give us cause to expect the deficits leading up to May to widen as public works and election-related spending gets underway," it said.

"For 2007 as a whole, we do not expect major fiscal deficit slippage (meaning, a deficit beyond 2 percent of gross domestic product) because the main government leadership would remain largely intact, in our view," UBS added.

Key to Asean success

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN CEBU IS over. After 39 years of discussions, there will finally be an Asean charter that will bring the Asean countries together as possibly the world's largest economic bloc. It will be approved later this year for the Asean Summit in Singapore.

The Philippines should be congratulated for having catalyzed the Asean nations into action. But it is critical that this action be toward the right direction, which can be made possible through its institutionalization in the Asean charter.

Breakthrough

For the private sector, the only group recognized by the Asean is the Asean Business Advisory Council or Abac, which is made up of management people from industry.

In the absence of a farmer and fisherfolk voice in the Asean, Abac chair Jose Concepcion had volunteered to bring their views to the council. Last Jan. 13, he did better than that. He brought the farmers and fisherfolk themselves to Abac.

In a speech he made to the leaders of the 10 Asean nations, Concepcion said: "I address your excellencies with emotion. Because 39 years after our founding fathers organized the Asean, the Asean is now faced with the grim face of poverty. We are grateful to our Asean heads of governments for creating Abac in 1997 to provide private sector feedback, accelerate regional integration and advance private and public sector partnership."

He explained how he had very open discussions with representatives of the 10 Asean countries: "Courageously and with respect, I share with you the results of these discussions on what you have to do to move forward and address the poverty of our people in the region."

Concepcion then announced an event unprecedented since Abac's inception: "Abac will host a dialogue at its meeting tomorrow afternoon with stakeholders from labor, farmers and fishermen. The Asean leaders of labor, farmers and fishermen have agreed to dialogue on how to enhance social harmony in the regional economic integration, which is crucial to achieve a truly one caring and sharing community."

Social dialogue

During the Abac meeting the next day, Asia Pacific regional secretary for the United Network International Christopher Ng stated the importance of social dialogues: "This is the open secret beyond the success of the European Union, whose parliament even issued a social directive mandating social dialogue between EU corporations and EU unions. On the other hand, the absence of dialogue and the consequence and failure to forge social harmony and cooperation are at the roots of the social and economic divisions haunting other regional integration projects in other parts of the world, like those in Latin America."

At the Abac social dialogue, four Filipinos spoke on behalf of four Asean-related organizations. Glenn Ymata of the Southeast Asia Fish for Justice Network asked the Asean not to limit itself to trade, but focus more on sustainable development, such as creating a regional program for community-based coastal management systems. Gregorio San Diego, founding president of the Asian Federation of Poultry Raisers, asked that trade flexibility clauses in the WTO be adopted in the Asean, such as the special product and special safeguard mechanisms for selective trade liberalization.

Rosalinda Pineda-Ofroneo, regional coordinator of Home Net Southeast Asia, asked that the informal sector, especially home-based entrepreneurs and workers, be given the recognition and opportunity in Asean's economic plans. And Rene Ofroneo, representing the Asia Monitor Resource Center, supported the call of former President Fidel Ramos for the Asean to recognize the five core labor rights: freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination at work, no forced labor, and no child labor.

Conclusion

Philippine Ambassador Donald Dee said he would work for the Philippines to champion the recommendations given that afternoon for Abac and Asean adoption. But in order for this initial victory to be a continuing one, it is necessary to institutionalize broader stakeholder participation in Asean. Abac executive director Nara Soeprapto from Jakarta, Indonesia, agrees with this direction.

It would therefore be wise to heed Ng's recommendation: "The Asean charter being drafted by the Asean leaders should guarantee representation for the various groups such as business, labor, farmers, fisherfolk, and other sectors. As it is, we understand the business sector is represented by Abac. We believe that representation for other sectors will enable them to contribute meaningfully to the policy formulation process in the Asean.."

Then we will have a complete Asean community with stakeholder participation and social dialogue that will be the key to its success.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

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Equity Fund	1.498189	1.487049

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Jan. 16, 2007	Last Week Jan. 09, 2007
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Managed Fund - Peso	1.83582	1.83381
Growth Fund - Peso	1.66326	1.61879
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3650	1.3695

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GOINGS-ON

Meralco bill format cited

A CONSUMER GROUP LAUDED THE NEW LAYout of Manila Electric Co.'s monthly electricity bill, saying the format "supports the principles of transparency and accountability."

The National Consumer Welfare Advocates (NCWA) said the new bill format "clearly explains the components of the monthly bill and where every centavo of the consumer's monthly payment goes."

NCWA spokesperson Conrado delos Reyes said it was "a boost to education and protection of power consumers and helps pinpoint to us the areas of possible advocacy."

The consumer's ability to scrutinize the monthly electric bill helps him determine whether there are components in his consumption that are within his reasonable control, he said.

CebuPac raises capacity

CEBU PACIFIC increases the capacity of its Manila-Singapore service by 20 percent, with the upgrade of the current Airbus A319 service to an A320 beginning March 22, 2007.

The Manila-Singapore daily service started on Aug. 31 last year and has been averaging 80 percent in passenger loads. CEB's A319 aircraft has a capacity of 150 seats while the A320s have a seating capacity of 179.

The lowest "Go" fare for the Manila-Singapore service starts from P2,499 one-way.

New branch locations

THREE CHINA BANK branches recently transferred to bigger and better locations—Fairview, Blumentritt and Shaw-Pasig branches. These branches sport the new China Bank signature look that's low-key but modern.

China Bank Fairview is at the ground floor of Angelenix House, Fairview Avenue corner Camaro Street, Quezon City.

The Blumentritt branch is on 1771-1781 Cavite St. cor. Leonor Rivera St., Blumentritt in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Citystate's 16th branch

CITYSTATE Savings Bank recently opened its newest branch in Barangay Putatan, Muntinlupa.

The Muntinlupa branch, Citystate Bank's 16th, allows the bank to bring its products and services closer to residential areas and business establishments in south Metro Manila.

The bank opened its first branch on Chino Roces Avenue corner De La Rosa Street in Makati City on Aug. 8, 1997.

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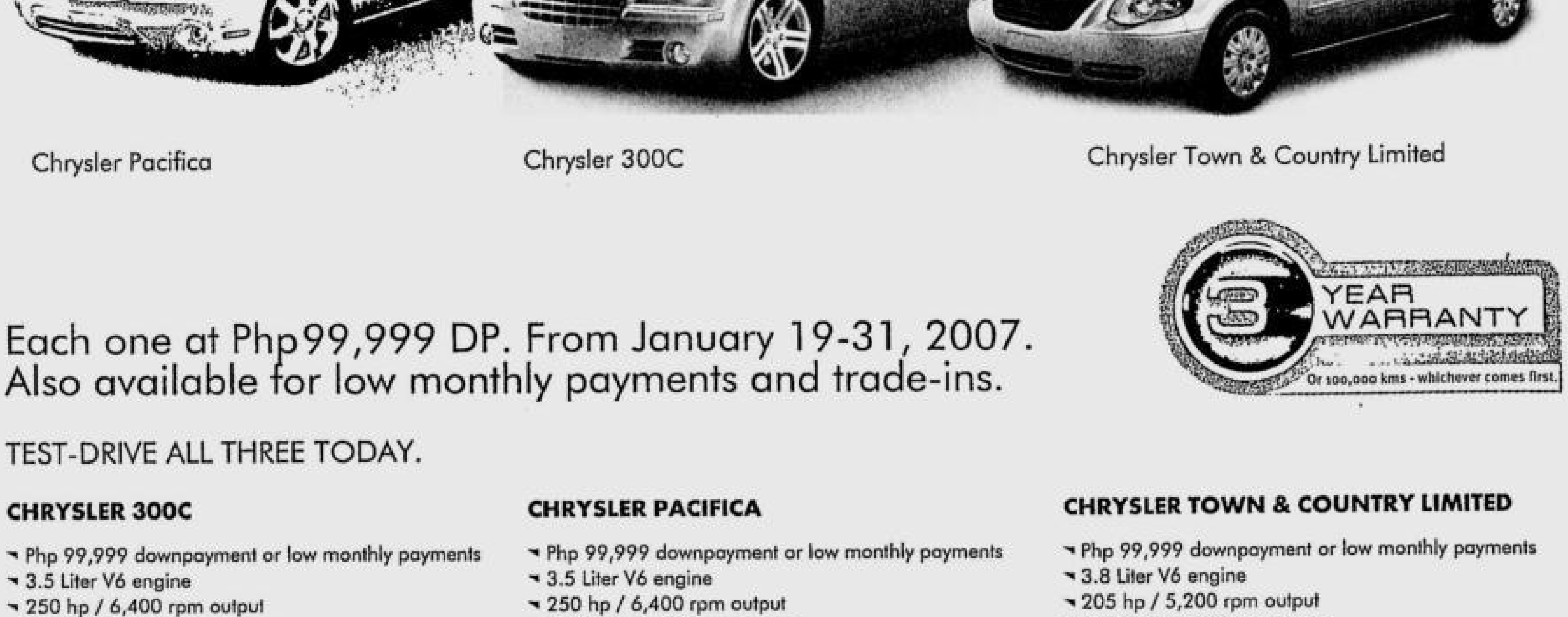

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Reclaimed Macau plot new focus of world gambling

MACAU—FROM AMONG A FOREST of cranes gathered on a plot of reclaimed land at the edge of the former Portuguese enclave of Macau, a colossal new gambling haven is rising at an incredible rate.

The first of what is expected to be at least seven massive hotel-casino complexes stands at one end, still under construction but already displaying the opulence of what will be the region's largest hotel with 3,000 rooms.

Next to it, builders are putting the finishing touches to southern China's largest and most high-tech convention space, a massive million square-foot beast of a building.

Further along, workmen have just begun laying the foundations of a movie and TV studio that will also double, when it opens next year, as a Florida theme park-style entertainment center.

Dubbed the Cotai Strip after the two small islands it straddles—Coloane and Taipa—it is for the moment a chaotic mess of construction vehicles and half-finished buildings.

But economists believe that within four years, this plot in the heart of Asia's Las Vegas will be the powerhouse driving the world's biggest casino destination.

"Cotai is where it's at—we would be foolish not to be there," American casino mogul Steve Wynn said when the first of his Asian casino-hotels opened in the main part of Macau last year.

Wynn's endorsement is particularly symbolic as Cotai is the brainchild of his arch-rival in Las Vegas, Sheldon Adelson, chair of Sands, the giant that runs the landmark Venetian in Nevada, a replica of which will be the first hotel-casino to open on the new strip later this year.

Immediately spotting Macau's potential, Adelson spent billions reclaiming land from the South China Sea to house his vision of an Asian casino city.

Since then, Macau's traditional casino heart, the small peninsula about three miles to the north, has flourished.

At least half a dozen huge casinos, including Wynn Macau and Hong Kong-based Galaxy's StarWorld have opened there in the past three years and 16 hotels are under construction.

The upshot has been that even before the Cotai strip opens, Macau is already the world's single largest casino center, pulling in $6.4 billion last year to eclipse the combined earnings of Las Vegas' famous strip.

Economic growth at 26 percent over the past four years has been driven largely by a massive influx of Chinese tourists.

Macau authorities said Wednesday that arrivals for 2006 rose to a record 22 million, up 17 percent on 2005 and double that of 2003.

Mainland travelers accounted for 12 million of the total.

Credit ratings agency Standard and Poor's predicts such growth will continue and expects that in the next four years, Macau will overtake the whole of Las Vegas in terms of earnings. *AFP*

SOUVENIR sellers wait for tourists at the Ruins of St. Paul's in Macau, where even more casinos are being set up. AFP

Yen hit as BOJ holds rates; Asia shares up

SINGAPORE—THE YEN FELL TO A 13-MONTH low against the dollar below 121 yen and Japanese government bonds weakened on Thursday after the Bank of Japan kept interest rates unchanged at a policy meeting.

Japan's Nikkei marked the day with its highest close for nine months amid talk of a merger in the drugs sector, and London financial bookmakers saw UK stocks climbing between 8 and 11 points.

Resource shares climbed as oil prices recovered from a 20-month low, but Apple Inc.'s quarterly results sent mixed signals to Asian tech stocks.

Indian shares reached a fresh record, and gold traded near a two-week high, supported by plans for the launch of a gold exchange traded fund in India.

In recent days, widely held expectations for a Japanese interest rate rise were thrown into doubt by press reports saying the BOJ would hesitate this time.

But traders said a 6-3 vote in favor of unchanged Japanese rates, after a 9-0 vote in December, indicated a rise was still likely next month.

The BOJ justified its decision saying economic growth was weaker than it had forecast three months ago.

But some analysts said it looked as if the central bank had bowed to pressure from the government to hold off on a hike.

Traders saw continued pressure on the low-yielding yen.

The dollar climbed above 121 yen by yesterday afternoon, extending this week's previous 13-month peak 120.88 yen.

Japanese government bond futures were 0.30 points lower at 134.10.

Crude oil recovered a further 18 cents to $52.42 a barrel as cooler weather rekindled heating demand in the United States.

It had slipped on Wednesday to a 20-month low just above $50.

PetroChina and the MSCI's index of energy stocks outside Japan both jumped 1.3 percent.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average closed 0.6 percent higher, its highest finish since April last year.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.2 percent, and MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares gained some 0.4 percent.

Drugs firm Tanabe Seiyaku Co. Ltd. scored a 5.4 percent rise on news it may merge with Mitsubishi Pharma Corp., lifting Japan's drugs sector.

But investors sold Japanese technology stocks following a 0.74 percent drop in the US Nasdaq and after shares of Apple slipped in after-hours trading on its outlook for the current quarter, which lagged analysts' expectations.

In Taipei, however, the focus was on Apple's strong profit in the quarter just ended Apple supplier Foxconn rose 0.5 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed about flat on Wednesday.

Gold traded at around $633.00, in sight of a two-week high of 633.80 reached in New York on Wednesday. *Reuters*

Fed more positive on US economy

Most regions indicate moderate growth at start of '07, survey says

WASHINGTON—THE ECONOMY ENTERED the new year in pretty good shape, with most parts of the United States enjoying moderate growth, businesses boosting hiring and workers getting bigger paychecks.

That mostly positive snapshot of business conditions around the country, released by the Federal Reserve on Wednesday, comes as the US continues to deal with strains from the housing slump.

The survey is based on information supplied by 12 regional Federal Reserve banks and collected before Jan. 8.

The information will figure into discussions at the central bank's first session of this year to examine interest rate policy on Jan. 30-31.

Most economists believe the Fed will continue to hold interest rates steady at that time and probably through much of this year.

The Fed has left interest rates alone since August, marking its first break in a two-year rate-raising campaign to fend off inflation.

The Fed's goal is to slow the economy sufficiently to curb inflation but not so much as to cripple economic growth.

The survey dashed investors' hopes that the Fed soon might lower interest rates. The Dow Jones industrials lost 5.44 points to close at 12,577.15. The decline came after three straight days of record closes.

On the inflation front, the Fed survey said that "overall prices increased moderately. Prices for energy and a number of materials have eased and competition has kept prices for final goods in check."

The Fed regions of Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis and Kansas City described inflation pressures as "easing or moderating."

Manufacturers in the Boston and Cleveland regions said prices for materials they use in production were mostly stable.

They did, however, report some increases in metal prices.

Retail prices were steady in the New York, Atlanta and Dallas regions, but were edging up in the Richmond, Virginia region, the report said.

On the jobs front, the Fed survey found that businesses showed an increasing appetite to hire. Some businesses in some regions had difficulty finding qualified workers.

Fed policymakers also have said they will keep a close eye on labor costs to make sure they don't spark unwanted inflation.

For all of 2006, the nation's unemployment rate dropped to 4.6 percent, a six-year low, the government reported earlier this month. Workers' wages, which had been whittled by inflation, grew by 4.2 percent for the 12 months ending December.

Economists say wages are now growing faster than consumer prices, which should leave people with more money to spend. That's good for workers and for the economy because consumer spending is a big force driving overall economic activity.

Retailers generally reported higher sales, although automobile sales were sluggish in several regions, the Fed survey said. Manufacturing activity, meanwhile, expanded in most regions. *AP*

A SOUTH Korean model displays a new model of iPod shuffle. An Australian bank unveiled a new indicator of future foreign exchange directions based on Apple's ubiquitous iPod that it says is more accurate than the Big Mac Index introduced by the Economist magazine in 1986. AFP

European economies strong, IMF says

WASHINGTON—EURO ZONE economies are in a strong position with a long-awaited recovery in investment and employment, the head of the International Monetary Fund said on Wednesday, also urging the 13-nation bloc to use the good times to lower their deficits.

In a speech to Georgetown University students, IMF managing director Rodrigo Rato said euro-area economic growth in 2006 was likely to be above 2.5 percent, slightly stronger than the 2.4 percent envisaged in September.

Growth should moderate to slightly over 2 percent through 2008, he added.

He urged political leaders to resume global trade talks under the Doha round and said if protectionism surfaced it could dampen the growth outlook.

Rato said a trade deal, stalled over farm issues, was still possible.

"Right now the question is about political leadership," he said. "The cost of what still has not been agreed is not that big. We're talking about very small amounts but there seems to be a lot of resistance to those things," he added.

Rato said a conclusion of the talks would prove that the world's richest economies—the United States, Japan and Europe—are willing to be part of a multilateral system of rules and that they believe in free trade.

"This is a very important message," he said, adding that it would be a "huge mistake" to try and substitute a global trade pact with bilateral agreements.

Rato, who is a former Spanish finance minister, said euro zone countries needed to be more aggressive about lowering their fiscal deficits and implementing reforms.

He applauded Germany, which this month assumed the revolving presidency of the EU, for making jobs and growth a priority for discussion.

"In many European countries, more ambitious action is needed to tackle structural deficits," he said.

"The Fund has recommended that those countries which have not yet achieved their medium term objectives for their budgets aim at an improvement in the fiscal position of half a percent of GDP a year," he added.

Unlike cyclical deficits which come and go with business cycles, structural deficits are more long-term and will not be erased by shifts in the economy, and need policy action.

Rato cited a European Commission forecast that the euro area's public debt would hit 200 percent of gross domestic product by 2050 if revenue or expenditure measures.

Still, even if the member nations met their medium-term objectives by 2010, debt would be only 80 percent of GDP, he said.

"So a little more adjustment now can head off serious long term problems," Rato added.

Rato said the euro zone needed to address reforms in the labor market and financial sector to boost investment and growth.

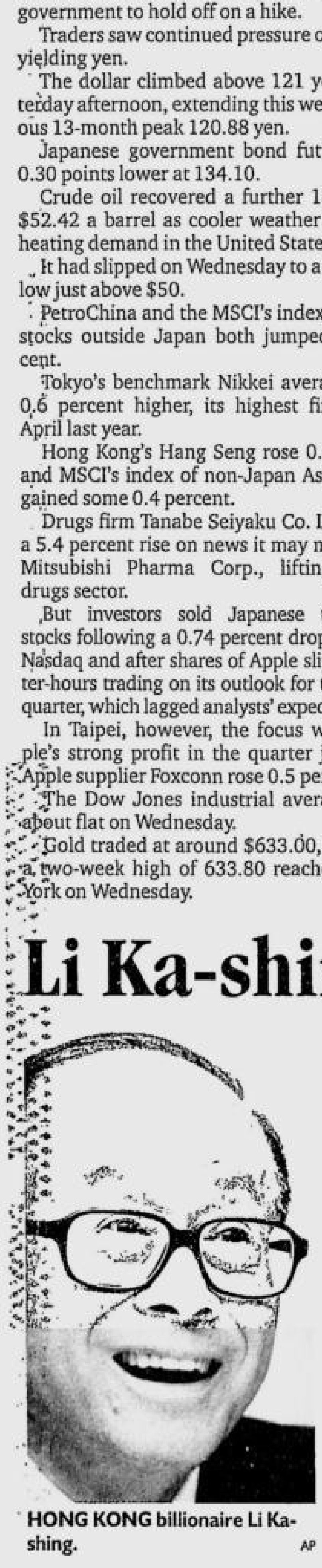
"There is strong evidence that countries that adopt a package of labor market and product market liberalization can achieve good outcomes in both employment and economic growth," Rato said.

He said the banking sector needed to improve competitiveness, integrate clearing and settlement systems, and address issues related to supervision and regulatory regimes.

He also said there was a need to bolster approaches to crisis management that differ between countries.

Integration of equity markets in Europe was incomplete, which IMF research showed may fragment investment, he added. *Reuters*

Li Ka-shing tops Forbes' list of richest people in China



HONG KONG billionaire Li Ka-shing. AP

SHANGHAI, CHINA—ASIA'S richest tycoons are profiting mightily from China's economic rise, with Hong Kong real estate and ports magnate Li Ka-shing once again in the lead, Forbes magazine said yesterday.

Li was among many billionaires who reaped big profits from their ties to the mainland China market, as his fortune rose to an estimated $22 billion (euro17 billion) from $18.8 billion a year before, the magazine said in announcing its annual list of the wealthiest in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Li, 78, has long been at or near the top of various rich lists compiled by financial magazines and researchers.

His empire includes the Hutchison Whampoa and Cheung Kong conglomerates.

China's economy has been growing at rates of more than 10 percent for several years running. Most of the tycoons in Hong Kong and Taiwan have extensive business interests in the mainland, further benefiting from soaring real estate and stock prices.

China's main Shanghai Composite Index more than doubled in value last year, with Hong Kong's key index climbing 43 percent and Taiwan's 20 percent.

Forbes compiles a separate list for mainland tycoons.

The most recent version of that list was topped by Wong Kwong-yu, a 37-year-old appliance retailer whose wealth totaled $2.3 billion (euro1.8 billion).

Hong Kong and Taiwan businesses are getting richer through investments, operating businesses or simply "feeling the halo effect from proximity to the mainland," Forbes said in a press release.

Several of the tycoons topping the list added billions in wealth through share listings.

That included Hong Kong's Lee Shau Kee, No. 2 with wealth estimated at $16.5 billion (euro12.8 billion).

Lee, founder of property firm Henderson Land, received a windfall from his investment in a Hong Kong initial public offering by Nine Dragons Paper Co., a mainland-based container board and recycling company headed by Zhang Yin, China's wealthiest businesswoman.

Zhang was No. 5 on Forbes' mainland China list, with $1.5 billion (euro1.16 billion) in assets.

Forbes said the combined net worth of the 40 richest Hong Kong and Taiwan citizens rose by $28 billion (euro21.7 billion) from a year earlier to $154 billion (euro119.3 billion).

Twenty-eight added to their fortunes, with only four from last year's list losing wealth, Forbes said.

Third on the list were the three Kwok brothers, Raymond, Thomas and Walter, who run Sun Hung Kai Properties, one of Hong Kong's biggest property owners, and have combined wealth estimated at $14 billion.

Michael Kadoorie, whose family had extensive business interests in Shanghai before the 1949 Communist revolution, is fourth with a fortune of $9 billion, with a big stake in the Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels and CLP Holdings, a Hong Kong electric utility.

The wealthiest Taiwan-based businessman, according to the list, was Tsai Hong-tu, whose $7.1 billion in assets were mainly inherited from his father Tsai Wan-lin, an insurance and real estate mogul.

Taiwan's second wealthiest was Terry Gou, whose Hon Hai Precision, flagship of his computer manufacturing empire, has units making iPods and phones for Apple Inc. on the Chinese mainland.

Gou's wealth was estimated at $5.5 billion. *AP*

BUSINESS *Friday*

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Marketing, communications enter digital age

YOU ARE TIME MAGAZINE'S PERSON OF the Year. You are one of billions of digital media users who generate and share content on the Internet, and the reputable magazine acknowledges this generation's way of creating and sharing content.

Indeed, the Web has evolved from mere information superhighway to a myriad of other roles; a content-sharing conduit and a channel to live alternate lives are some of them.

Its users give the Internet full attention and involvement, and as marketers and communicators, this is the ideal scenario for engagement.

Marketing potential

Media communications agency Universal McCann (UM), a member of McCann Worldgroup, delved into the various facets of this medium to pinpoint the activities worth pursuing.

Using UM's proprietary tool InTuition, the 2006 Web 2.0 Research was conducted online among 850 Filipinos using a structured questionnaire.

A good representation of gender, profession and age group splits was established, enabling the research to look into demographic nuances.

Here are some quick statistics:

- Points of access: work/school (46 percent); Internet café (43 percent); at home (41 percent)
- Length of time online: 1-3 hours (average TV viewing levels is about three hours)
- "Primetime": lunch break at work, after school, weekend mid-afternoons

Internet activities

So what are the activities that Pinoys online engage in on a regular (i.e., at least once a week) basis?

Virtual connection has become a significant part of the lives of most Filipinos.

E-mailing and chatting have proven to be important channels in maintaining virtual presence.

Although the interest remains to be on source of news and information about products, brands and companies, activities involving content-sharing, like visiting a job site or sharing pictures on the Internet, also figure in, proof that Filipinos are part of the growing number of creative individuals who are sharing a part of themselves online.

Emerging activities

Clearly, the Internet is largely about personal connections to a lot of Pinoys, as shown in the emerging online activities that they are already doing.

It is also becoming an alternative source of "traditional" content like music or mobile phone features.

The positive reception respondents have to podcasting and blogging may be strong indications of how open they are to expressing their own and listening to other people's opinions.

This may eventually recast their definition of opinion leaders and who they would listen to and believe on brand usage.

VOIP & IPTV, on the other hand, both offer cash savings, something which consumers are also likely to see as a value-for-money alternative to their current media and connectivity tools.

Consumer power

Consumers are now poised to become co-creators of brand message, even co-owners of a brand.

Marketers must be ready to give them the free hand to voice their opinion about a brand and listen to what they are saying.

In doing so, they can be strong allies and even propagators of positive word-of-mouth.

(For more information about your brands' potentials on the Internet, contact Universal McCann Consulting at 757-2333, or e-mail maita.consulta@ap.universalmccann.com or arlene.aquino@ap.universalmccann.com.)

Top 10 Internet Activities

	%	Demographic Skews
Using Web-based e-mails (Yahoo.com, Hotmail.com)	87	Above 20 years old, professionals, entrepreneurs
Using instant messenger to chat	75	Young adults, housewives, professionals, entrepreneurs
Reading news online	70	Males, above 30 years old, entrepreneurs
Using a search engine to get brand information before buying	63	Males, young adults, professionals
Reading regular newsletters from websites after signing up for them	61	Above 30 years old, working individuals
Visiting a job site (e.g. trabaho.com)	59	Professionals, young adults
Sharing/posting pictures on the 'Net	56	Young adults, working people
Sourcing information about movies/DVDs	54	Teens and young adults
Finding out about brands/companies	54	Young adults, professionals
Reading sponsored content pages/websites	49	Teens and young adults, students

Emerging Internet Activities

New Internet Services:	%Already Into It	% With Positive Disposition
Social Networking Sites	45	26
Video Chatting Sites	44	31
Game Downloading Sites	44	28
Audio Streaming	41	31
Mobile Ringtones / Wallpapers	39	30
Gaming Sites	39	27
Video Streaming	38	32
Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)	33	36
Blogging	30	45
Internet Protocol TV (IPTV)	26	40
Price Comparison Sites	26	33
RSS Feeds	23	34
MMRPOG	22	31
Podcasting	18	59

Cellular phones take on another incarnation

By Abigail L. Ho

SINGAPORE—A PHONE THAT allows its users to take vivid still photos, shoot DVD-quality videos, surf the Internet, play games, listen to hours' worth of music, and find the nearest ATM must weigh a ton and look like a mini computer with a drab and geeky personality.

But if Finnish handset manufacturer Nokia had its way, a "multimedia computer" can do all that and so much more while still looking sleek and fashion forward.

Evolution

Nokia Multimedia Asia Pacific vice president Jose-Luis Martinez said here that "the multimedia computer" represented the evolution of the personal computer—sans the bulk and the lack of aesthetic value.

"It's about people. That's the reason we're bringing multimedia computers to the market. The market opportunity is all around converged mobile devices," he said during the recent launch of the newest additions to Nokia's Nseries multimedia computers.

For the two new Nseries handsets—the N93i and the N76—he said Nokia had "modern and young-minded early technology adopters" in mind.

Budding directors, or even just the average tech addict with a penchant for taking videos of anything and everything, can get hooked on the N93i, with its ability to take DVD-quality videos.

The N93i has an MPEG-4 VGA video capture at 30 frames a second, stereo audio recording and digital stabilization.

It also features a 3.2-megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss optics and 3x optical zoom.

It also has onboard editing capabilities that can be enhanced by using the Adobe Premiere Elements 3.0 software that comes with the handset.

Photos taken and videos shot using the N93i can be easily transferred to a PC, burned to CDs, or even shared with friends via blogging service Vox.

The feature-packed phone-cum-videocam does not sacrifice aesthetics though, as it boasts of a new metallic finish keymat and a mirror effect cover and floating display.

When not in use, the mirror effect cover looks exactly like a dark mirror.

But when activated, the display appears, seeming to "float" on the screen.

Form and function

Nokia is deviating from the conservative look of earlier Nseries models with the N76, a thin clamshell phone designed with fashionista music lovers in mind.

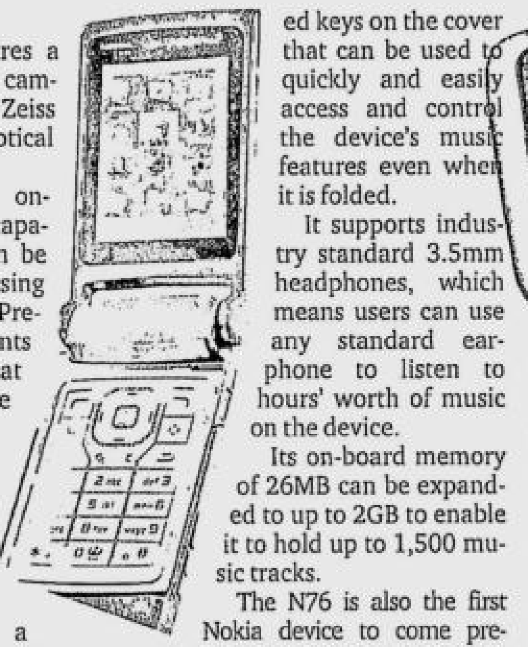
Martinez described the unit as a "computer done beautifully."

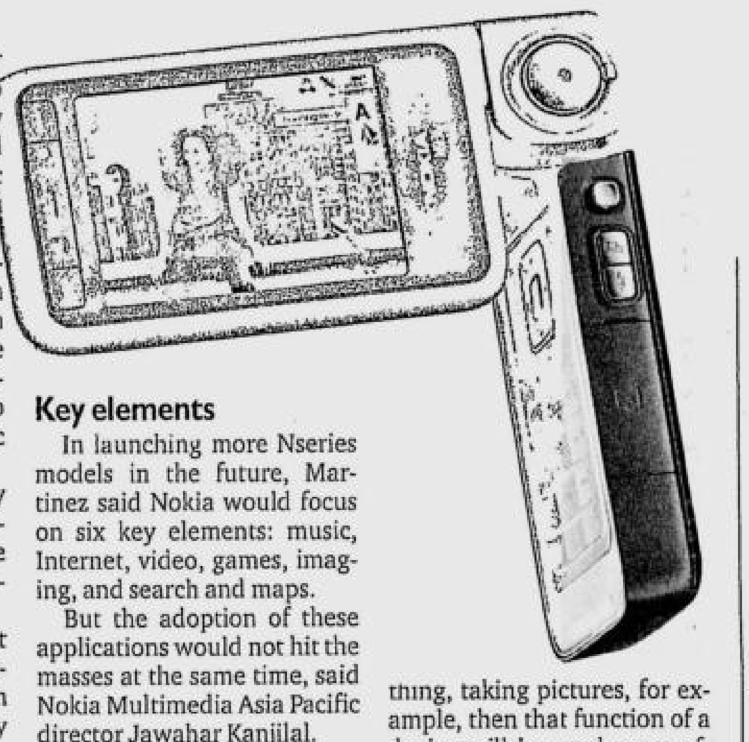
The phone, which comes in red and in black, has dedicated keys on the cover that can be used to quickly and easily access and control the device's music features even when it is folded.

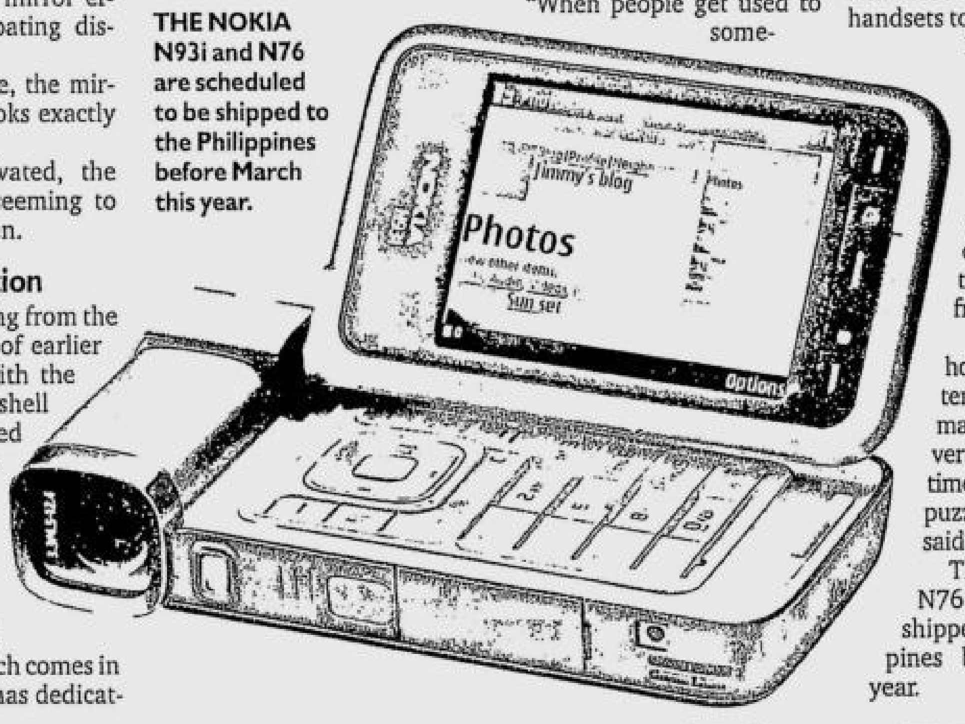
It supports industry standard 3.5mm headphones, which means users can use any standard earphone to listen to hours' worth of music on the device.

Its on-board memory of 26MB can be expanded to up to 2GB to enable it to hold up to 1,500 music tracks.

The N76 is also the first Nokia device to come preloaded with five Adobe Flash Lite mini games created by Japanese mobile entertainment content developer CELL Co. Ltd.







THE NOKIA N93i and N76 are scheduled to be shipped to the Philippines before March this year.

Key elements

In launching more Nseries models in the future, Martinez said Nokia would focus on six key elements: music, Internet, video, games, imaging, and search and maps.

But the adoption of these applications would not hit the masses at the same time, said Nokia Multimedia Asia Pacific director Jawahar Kanjilal.

"It's not a matter of one element being stronger or weaker than others, but of how ready the market is to use a particular element," he said.

"When people get used to something, taking pictures, for example, then that function of a device will be used more often," he added.

Imaging, for example, would continue to be strong, he said, as people get more and more used to using their handsets to take photos.

Music would be a function of memory, the use of maps would be hinged on the availability of map content, and video would depend on regulators and available infrastructure, he said.

"It depends on how the local ecosystem in each of the markets grows. Each vertical will have its time. All pieces of the puzzle should fit," he said.

The Nokia N93i and N76 are scheduled to be shipped to the Philippines before March this year.

Shell revs up new brand campaign

By Daxim L. Lucas

PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM Corp.—the country's second largest refiner and distributor of petroleum—has embarked on a new image campaign, both internationally and domestically, in a bid to differentiate its products from those offered by its competitors.

In a press briefing, Shell general manager for retail Sammy De Guzman said the campaign, called "Made to Move," was meant to expand the firm's scope from just merely a vendor of gasoline to one that encompasses the entire driving experience spectrum of its customers.

"This is the first time in recent years that Shell has used an emotional brand voice to market its fuel as opposed to concentrating solely on the product," he said.

"This change in our approach to communications represents our desire to build stronger relations with our customers, and to help them get more out of their driving experiences."

Made to move

SHELL decides to appeal to market's emotions

MARKETING STRATEGY

According to the company, the campaign signifies a change in Shell's advertising positioning, with an emotional brand message being used to market and sell the fuel, in contrast to the product-focused campaigns on recent times.

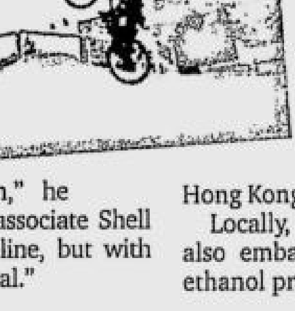
The firm has long held the number two spot in the local petroleum retail market with roughly 30 percent of the market. It ranks behind industry leader Petron Corp. which holds a market share of approximately 40 percent, but ahead of Chevron Philippines—formerly Caltex—which holds a 15-percent slice of the domestic market.

The firm is hoping to raise its market share through brand differentiation, despite having less number of gasoline outlets than the market leader.

Officials of Shell and J. Walter Thompson (JWT)—its international ad agency—stressed that the "Made to Move" campaign is a significant move for the firm even if petroleum is a relatively inelastic product, where demand is not normally affected by price fluctuations.

"This is important because we don't want people to think of Shell in a grudging fashion," said JWT regional marketing director Mike Cox in an interview. He added that the firm's new image is also important in the context of recent developments in the world crude oil market where prices have risen to historic highs.

"This is part of a global campaign," he said. "We want to associate Shell not only with gasoline, but with movement, in general."



30-SECOND ads show extraordinary movement, which goes with Shell's new line, "Made to Move"

Other countries where Shell has launched its re-branding campaign in 2006 are the United Kingdon, Greece and Hong Kong, among others.

Locally, the petroleum firm has also embarked on its own bio-ethanol program, in line with the recently enacted Biofuels Law, which mandates petroleum firms to sell ethanol-blended gasoline to the local market.

"We are the first to launch bio-ethanol with our unleaded E10 gasoline which is two years ahead of what the law mandates," De Guzman said.

HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

Office of the President

NOTICE OF SALE

Please be informed that the following properties of the Home Guaranty Corporation are being offered for public bidding:

	PROPERTY LOCATION	TYPE	FLOOR AREA	LOT AREA	SELLING PRICE	REMARKS
1	Unit 301-B, Bonaventure Garden Homes, S. Osmeña St., Makati City	Condominium	31.75		1,117,600.00	Vacant
2	Unit 206-B, Bonaventure Garden Homes, S. Osmeña St., Makati City	Condominium	61.3		2,158,200.00	Vacant
3	Unit 308-B, Bonaventure Garden Homes, S. Osmeña St., Makati City	Condominium	61.3		2,158,200.00	Vacant
4	Unit 206-C, Bonaventure Garden Homes, S. Osmeña St., Makati City	Condominium	61.3		2,158,200.00	Vacant
7	B1L2, Marygrace Subd., Bo. Nabuag, Plaridel, Bulacan	House & Lot	32	40	162,800.00	illegaly occupied
8	B2L10-A, Marygrace Subd., Bo. Nabuag, Plaridel, Bulacan	House & Lot	48	60	231,000.00	illegaly occupied
9	B3L6-A, Marygrace Subd., Bo. Nabuag, Plaridel, Bulacan	House & Lot	48	60	236,500.00	Vacant
10	B3L8-C, Marygrace Subd., Bo. Nabuag, Plaridel, Bulacan	House & Lot	48	60	231,000.00	illegaly occupied
11	B4L5, Marygrace Subd., Bo. Nabuag, Plaridel, Bulacan	House & Lot	32	40	162,800.00	illegaly occupied
12	B7L3, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	25	60	266,200.00	illegaly occupied
13	B7L7, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		60	266,200.00	Vacant
14	B7L8&10, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	244	164	653,400.00	illegaly occupied
15	B9L17, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		106	291,500.00	illegaly occupied
16	B10L1, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	25	80	321,200.00	illegaly occupied
17	B13L24, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	3	41	173,360.00	illegaly occupied
18	B17L12, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	24	54	261,580.00	illegaly occupied
19	B21L13, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	25	115	495,550.00	illegaly occupied
20	B21L14, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		98	269,500.00	Vacant
21	B21L15, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	48	92	427,240.00	illegaly occupied
22	B22L8, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
23	B22L16, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
24	B22L17, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	24	54	189,200.00	Vacant
25	B22L19, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
26	B22L20, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
27	B22L21, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	189,200.00	Vacant
28	B22L22, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
29	B22L23, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
30	B22L24, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	148,500.00	Vacant
31	B22L25, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		62	184,140.00	Vacant
32	B22L26, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		55	163,350.00	Vacant
33	B24L4, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		44	121,000.00	Vacant
34	B24L55, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		44	121,000.00	Vacant
35	B24L20, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	170,500.00	Vacant
36	B24L23, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan.	House & Lot	22	44	308,000.00	Vacant
37	B25L9, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		92	253,000.00	Vacant
38	B26L2, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		80	220,000.00	Vacant
39	B26L4, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		72	198,000.00	Vacant
40	B26L7, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	36	88	321,860.00	illegaly occupied
41	B26L8, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		57	156,750.00	Vacant
42	B26L9, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	36	91	330,770.00	illegaly occupied
43	B26L11, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		87	239,250.00	Vacant
44	B26L12, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		95	261,250.00	Vacant
45	B27L16, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	44	44	222,200.00	illegaly occupied
46	B28L25, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	121,000.00	Vacant
47	B28L26, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
48	B28L27, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		74	203,500.00	Vacant
49	B28L28, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	24	72	258,500.00	Vacant
50	B29L5, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
51	B29L6, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	69	250,250.00	Vacant
52	B29L7, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	76	269,500.00	Vacant
53	B29L9, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
54	B29L10, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	56	214,500.00	Vacant
55	B31L1, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		95	282,150.00	Vacant
56	B31L3, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		44	121,000.00	Vacant
57	B31L4., Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
58	B31L5, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
59	B31L6, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	191,180.00	Vacant
60	B31L7, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		81	222,750.00	Vacant
61	B31L8, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	121,000.00	Vacant
62	B31L9, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		66	181,500.00	Vacant
63	B31L10, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
64	B31L11, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		55	151,250.00	Vacant
65	B31L12, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	181,500.00	Vacant
66	B31L13, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	77,220.00	Vacant
67	B31L14, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	123,420.00	Vacant
68	B31L15, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		54	77,220.00	Vacant
69	B31L16, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	House & Lot	22	44	123,420.00	Vacant
70	B31L17, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		96	137,280.00	Vacant
71	B31L18, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		61	87,230.00	Vacant
72	B33L9, Villa Samantha Subd, Bo. Caingin, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Lot only		61	167,750.00	Vacant
73	B10L26, Villa Sta.Barbara Ph II Bgy. Minien East, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan	House & Lot	25	60	151,800.00	Vacant
74	B8L185A, Mercedes Vill, SMC Homes, Quebiawan, San Fdo. City, Pamp.	House & Lot	20	150	433,400.00	illegaly occupied
75	Lot B-2-DD, Psd-015533-027730, Bgy. Mabilao, San Fabian, Pangasinan	Lot only		5794	1,593,900.00	Vacant

FOR INTERESTED PARTIES, PLEASE CALL HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION AT 896-04-25, 897-31-49 OR VISIT OUR HEAD OFFICE AT JADE BLDG. NO. 335 SEN. GIL PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY

(Sgd.) **RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS**
OIC-VICE PRESIDENT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT/ACQUIRED
ASSETS DISPOSITION GROUP

(PDI - Jan. 19, 2007)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Legazpi City

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The National Food Authority Region V invites all interested parties (poultry & hog raisers; Feed users; & Industrial users) to participate and submit offers to the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) NFA Regional Office, Pier site Legazpi City for the sale through Public Bidding of the following damaged rice stocks at the minimum bid price indicated below on "as-is-where-is basis:"

A. TOTALLY DAMAGED

Province/ Warehouse	Variety/ Condition	Volume- Bag	Volume- Kg.	Minimum Bid Price/KG
Albay/Tabaco GID	VWEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 1.20
Albay/Tabaco GID	VXCW 62	85	4,241	Php 1.20
Albay/NFA owned	VWEW 62	2,800	140,134.6	Php 1.20
Albay/Bicol Seeds Libon	VCEW 62	600	30,000	Php 1.20
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VBEW 62	3,662	183,000	Php 1.20
Albay/RASI Leg. City	J2AW	179	5,687.6	Php 1.20
SUB TOTAL		8,326	413,063.2	

B. PARTIALLY DAMAGED

Province/ Warehouse	Variety	Volume- Bag	Volume- Kg.	Minimum Bid Price/KG
Albay/Abacorp	VUEW 62	3,000	149,700	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VBEW 62	1,000	49,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VWEW 62	800	39,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VWEW 62	2,200	109,780	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VBEW 62	1,500	74,850	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VUEW 62	1,700	84,630	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	VCEF 62	807	40,215	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	VWEW 62	4,600	230,000	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	PG1 – S	79	4,166	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	PG2 – S	9	449.15	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago-Tabaco	VWEW 62	2,000	99,800	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago-Tabaco	VXCW 62	500	24,950	Php 3.50
Albay/Bicol Seeds, Libon	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VBEW 62	500	25,000	Php 3.50
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VCEF 62	63	3,150	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		20,758	1,036,690.15	
Camarines/Sur GID	VWEF 6	145	7,250.6	Php 3.50
Cam. Sur/Balintawak	VCEW 62	1,484	74,209.6	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		1,629	81,460.2	
TOTAL		30,713	1,531,213.55	

The above items may be inspected at the aforesaid warehouses during office hours. Offerors shall be required to post a bid bond equivalent to ten (10%) percent of the total amount based on the bidder's price offer. It shall be in form of Cash, Manager's chck or Cashier's check payable to NFA

Bid documents such as tender form, including terms and conditions shall be issued only to interested and qualified bidders upon submission of the Letter of Intent accompanied by the following documents

1. Current NFA Certificate of Registration or license as poultry/hog raiser or as feedmiller;
2. The poultry/hog raiser or feedmiller should have been in operation for at least 2 years. Feedmillers must have hammer mill or technical capabilies in case of scientific formulation of feeds;
3. Barangay certification where the poultry/hog raising business/feedmill was being operated;
4. Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Registration with updated payment (Official Receipt)
5. Income Tax Return for year 2005 duly received and stamped by the BIR;
6. Financial Statement for the year 2005 duly certified by a CPA

Representative authorized to transact business with NFA for this particular bidding must present Special Power of Attorney in case of Single Proprietorship or a Board resolution if representing a corporation/partnership. Likewise, a SEC registration is required for corporation/partnership and DTI registration for Single proprietorship.

A non-refundable/non-transferable bidding fee of P 3,000.00 shall be paid by any pre-qualified bidder to defray bidding forms as well as processing cost.

All documents submitted must be duly "authenticated" upon submission otherwise it will not be officially admitted as pre-qualification documents

Only qualified bidders who passed during the pre-qualification screening will be allowed to participate in the bidding

Deadline for the issuance of bidding documents to pre qualified bidders shall not be later than 5:00 PM of January 29, 2007.

The National Food Authority Region V shall reserved 25% of the bidded variety for local small poultry and hog raisers.

The pre-bidding conference and bidding proper will be conducted at the NFA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NFA Regional Office, Pier Site, Legazpi City on the following schedules:

Pre-Bidding conference	January 30, 2007	10:00 AM
Submission of bids/Opening of Bids	January 30, 2007	1:30 PM

For further inquiries/details you may contact the RBAC Secretariat at Telephone Numbers (052) 480-7015; 480-7933; 820-0018.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR FORMALITIES FOUND THEREIN AND ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH OF ITS JUDGEMENT ARE MOST REASONABLE AND MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO NFA. THE RECOMMENDATION/DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE AS CONFIRMED & APPROVED BY THE NFA ADMINISTRATOR OR HIS DULY AUTHORIZED REPRSENTATIVE SHALL BE DEEMED FINAL.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman

(PDI – January 18, 19 & 20, 2007)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF AWARD

Notice is hereby given that the lot awards of the following beneficiaries in Dagat-Dagatan Development Project are hereby CANCELLED immediately in view of their failure to comply with the conditions of their awards such as non-occupancy, non-payment of their monthly amortization and sold their awarded lots without the consent of the Authority thereof:

	NAME OF AWARDEE	PHASE	OLD BLK.	OLD LOT	NEW BLK.	NEW LOT
1.	ESTANISLAO ALFANTA	I-A	28	8	13	8
2.	LEONCIO G. NUQUE	I-A	33	5	18	5
3.	JESUS RAMPULA	I-A	36	49	21	49
4.	CONCHITA RAYMUNDO (w)	I-A	27	17	12	17
5.	MIGUEL SABANAL	I-A	36	35	21	35
6.	BERNABE MENDOZA	II A1	27C	85	27	85
7.	VIRGINIA TEODORO	II A1	22	94	22	94
8.	FRANCISCA YABUT	II A2	32B	49	32	49
9.	SALVADORA CASIDSID	II A3	16	9	16	9
10.	TOMAS HIBAYA	II A3	9B	18	9	167
11.	LORENZO DERDER	II A4	18	29	18	29
12.	LEONOR DIMANLIG	II A4	38G	13	38G	13
13.	NENITA LARDIZABAL	II A4	38G	23	38G	23
14.	CORNELIO OQUENDO	II A4	37F	15	37F	15
15.	EMILIO BAQUIRAN	III-C	9A	13	9A	13
16.	CARLOS CUELA	III-C	11F	21	8	15
17.	ROGELIO DALIENG	III-C	3B	22	3B	22
18.	MA. LUISA JARATA	III-C	3J	4	3J	4
19.	MONICA KING	III-C	8E	30	8E	30
20.	DULCE MERCADO	III-C	3J	5	3J	5
21.	ERNESTO PAJARES	III-C	14E	21	7	28
22.	ELENO TIMBREZA	III-C	3M	14	3M	14
23.	ELIZABETH CALOING	III-D	5	65	5	65
24.	ELISA DOMINGO	III-D	29	18	29	18
25.	ADELAIDA FORTIN	III-D	30	27	30	27
26.	PAULINO MABUTAS	III-D	19	42	19	42
27.	SUSANA HERMIDA	III-D	32	11	32	11
28.	HERNAME PERATER	III-D	31	25	31	25
29.	ENRIQUETA SANTOS	III-D	9	48	9	48
30.	ROSALINA SANTOS	III-D	4	36	4	36
31.	MELITA TOBIAS	III-D	19	63	19	63
32.	FRANCISCO TRAIFALGAR	III-D	29	77	29	77
33.	DEMETRIO CATADMAN, JR.	III-E1	1B	32	1	244
34.	TERESITA ORSAL	III-E1	2F	1	2	79
35.	ESTANISLAWA LACDAN (W)	III-E1	10G	29	10	29
36.	SOCORRO NARAGDAO	III-E1	15C	14	15	49
37.	RUBEN JESUS ASUNCION, JR.	III-E2	44B	4	5B	4
38.	ELIZA BALDOVINO	III-E2	43D	11	4D	11
39.	ALICIA BELLEZA	III-E2	48J	17	9J	17
40.	ANA BONIFACIO	III-E2	49D	34	10D	34
41.	ZENAIDA CALANG	III-E2	45G	24	6G	24
42.	MARINA DE GUZMAN	III-E2	45H	10	6H	10
43.	EDUARDO ESPIRITU	III-E2	46A	23	7A	23
44.	CORAZON RAMOS	III-E2	49K	49	29	49
45.	RICKY DIANO	III-F1	34E	4	1	7
46.	DANTE JAVIER	III-F1	30C	12	1	01
47.	AMPARO MESINA	III-F1	33E	11	18	22
48.	REYNALDO SANTOS	III-F1	39K	1	4	2
49.	SALVADOR VITALICIO	III-F1	33L	28	4	3
50.	ERNESTO PALILEO	III-F2	57B	27	6B	27

(Sgd.) FEDERICO A. LAXA
General Manager

(PDI – January 12, 19, & 26, 2007)

It PAYS to have a great JOB!

PRODUCT REPRESENTATIVE

- Attractive, single female, 18-24 yrs. old at least 5' 2" in height
- College level/graduate (any course)
- Articulate, competent and can handle pressure
- Exudes confidence, with excellent interpersonal relations
- Provided with Car & Driver
- At least 1 year selling experience

RECEPTIONIST

- Female, single w/ pleasing personality, 18-25 years old
- Highly competent & articulate
- Adept in selling, well-versed in English
- College graduate

Good Salary Awaits!

DRIVER

- Male, not more than 28 yrs. old
- With 5 years experience
- Organized, hardworking, trustworthy & reliable

Please Bring Your Resume with picture, Look for Betty.

CLEANCITY COMMERCIAL

1851 M. Orosa St., Malate, Manila **Tel. No. 524-5292**
646 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City **Tel. No. 749-0581**

Provincial Government of Bukidnon

Project Reference Number : 300-07-05
Name of the Project : Supply & Delivery of 4 units Ambulance & 4 units Medical Service Shuttle
Location of the Project : Provincial Governor's Office

Standard Form Number : SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	: **SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF 4 units Ambulance & 4 units Medical Service Shuttle**
Location	: **Provincial Governor's Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City**
Brief Description	: **For the use of the Provincial Hospitals of Bukidnon**
Approved Budget For the Contract	: **Seven Million Seven Hundred Twenty Seven Thousand Pesos (P 7,727,000.00)**
Project Completion/ Duration	: **Thirty (30) Calendar Days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed**

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Pre-Bidding Conference Performance Security, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows.

	Activities	Schedule	Venue
1	Posting of IAEB at the Provincial Website, GEPS & conspicuous places	January 18-29, 2007	Provincial Website, GEPS, Vicinity of PGSO, PGO, PTO & BAC Office
2.	Issuance of Bid Documents	January 29-31, 2007	PGSO, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon
3.	Pre-bid Conference	January 31, 2007 2:00 P.M.	BAC Conference Room, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City
4.	Opening of Bids	February 14, 2007 2:00 P.M.	BAC Conference Room, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City
5.	Bid Evaluation	February 16, 2007	BAC Conference Room, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City
6.	Post-Qualification	February 19, 2007	BAC Conference Room, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City
7.	Notice of Award	February 22, 2007	BAC Conference Room, Provincial Capitol, Malaybalay City

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable Bid documents fee in the amount of Three Thousand Pesos (P 3,000.00)

For inquiry, Please call Telephone Nos. 088-221-2537 and 088-221-4820

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved:

(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 19 & 26, 2007)

FOR SALE

A1 Condition Tooling Machines

GRINDER - BRAND: ACRA/OKAMOTO
MILLING - BRAND: PHOEBUS
LEADWELL VERTICAL
MACHINING CENTER
MORTON LATHE MACHINE
CHARMILLES WIRE-CUT
ARD EDM MACHINES

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Pasig 6567685
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10th year Anniversary Sale!
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•SERENA "New Type" ₱260
•SPACE GEAR ₱299
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Marcos Hi-way, Cainta, Rizal
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RIZAL EXPERIMENTAL STATION AND PILOT SCHOOL OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Maybunga, Pasig City

List of Vacant Positions

(1) TEACHER III: SG-12; Item No. TCH3-30353; Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education with appropriate Major preparation; Two years of teaching experience; Eligibility: LET.

(1) TEACHER I: SG-10; Item No. TCH1-54194; Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education with appropriate Major preparation; No experience required. Eligibility: LET.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO-WEST, Lantawan
Pasonanca, Zamboanga City

LEASE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Notice is hereby given that the CENRO-WEST, Lantawan, Pasonanca, Zamboanga City will Lease to the highest bidder at 10:00 A.M. on March 15, 2007, the tract of land covered by Miscellaneous Lease Application No. 097332-21 of Concepcion L. Balaguer.

Location : Calarian, Zamboanga City
Description : MLI 0973322-000021
Area : 5,390 square meters
Appraised value of the land : Php 1,078,000.00
Total appraised value of the property : Php 14,552,483.04

All bids must be sealed and submitted to the Office of the CENR-WEST, at Lantawan, Pasonanca, Zamboanga City on or before the hour and date stated above and plainly "Bid for the Land described in MLI 097332-21." Bids must be accompanied with cash money order, treasury warrant, certified check, cashier's check for a sum equivalent to ten percentum (10%) of the bid. When a bid is withdrawn after the highest bidder is determined, the corresponding deposit thereof shall be forfeited to the government. No bid shall be less than the appraised value of the land. This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

(Sgd.) **TITO L. GADON**

(PDI-Dec. 22, 29, 2006; Jan. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
FUJITSU TEN SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F East Tower, PSE Bldg., Ortigas Complex, Pasig City	Hideki Kajitani	Japanese Coordinator
VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS PHILIPPINES (VSOP) 32 North Lawin Ave., Phil-Am Homes, Quezon City	Matthew Aiden Hall	Programme Manager
ASIA VIDEOSTREAM, INC. 43/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala, Makati City	Masato Tabe	Japanese Speaking Customer Support
ASIA VIDEOSTREAM, INC. 43/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala, Makati City	Masaru Suzuoki	Network Engineer
ORBIT DOT COM CYBER CORP. 2006 20/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave. Ortigas Ctr. Pasig City	Dong Hun Lee	President
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC.-PHILIPPINE BRANCH 4/F Plaza C. Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Nicholas Joseph Daniel Etten	Account Manager
TAS PLAN, INC. 23/F Equitable Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Shinya Higuchi	Treasurer

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI-Jan. 19, 2007)

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CHÂTEAUX DE PARIS
TOKYO MANSIONS
GOLF VIEW TERRACES
BALI MANSIONS
MEDITERRANEAN VILLAS
CALL 635-8108

AFFIDAVIT

I, KIMIKO SAGAMI, of legal age, widow and now residing at, 3 - 7 - 10 NAKAICHIYO TAKASAKI CITY GUNMA JAPAN, after having been sworn in accordance with law, depose and say that:

1. I am the only surviving Heir of Yoshiinka Sagami who died in the City of Makati, Metropolitan Manila, Philippines, on May 25, 2005 hereto attached as ANNEX "A" and made an integral part of this Affidavit.

2. Said deceased left the following condominium units hereto attached as ANNEX "B" inclusive and more particularly described as follows:

CCT	UNIT OFFICE	FLR AREA	# of P.S.	FLOOR LOCATION	PARKING FLR AREA	EQUIV GROSS FLR AREA	% SHARE
PT-17106	706	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17103	701	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17104	702	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17105	705	170.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	176.25	0.9117
PT-17144	703	140.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7566
PT-17145	704	140.00	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7566
39425	1406	149.70	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7104
39411	102	97.44	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.4624
39408	1409	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39409	1401	149.70	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.7104
39426	1411	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089
39424	1404	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39412	1410	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39410	1403	121.41	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.5761
39427	1405	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089
39430	1408	65.10	1	BASEMENT	12.5	146.25	0.3089

3. Said deceased left one hundred fifty seven million Philippine pesos, more or less, debts.

4. Pursuant to Rule 74, Section 1 of the Rule of Court of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, I hereby adjudicate unto myself the above described condominium units by means of this Affidavit and hereby files same with the appropriate Register of Deeds of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines with the request that said adjudication shall be made effective without judicial proceedings as prescribed by the above mentioned Rules of Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand this August 29, 2006 in the Tokyo, Japan.

(Signed)
KIMIKO SAGAMI

This is to certify that this document was subscribed before me by the above-named person (s) on this day August 29, 2006

(Signed)
Makaru Ikeda
Notary

(PDI-Jan. 19, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICES

CELESTINA V. MAGTIRA
April 6, 1916 - Jan. 17, 2007
Died in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 90.

Her body lies at Acacia Rose Chapel, Sanctuarium, cor. Quezon Ave. and Araneta Ave. Q.C.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 21, 2007 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Q.C.

LEONARDO C. VELASQUEZ
Peacefully joined our Lord on January 15, 2007.
His remains lie in state at No. 60 E. Castillo, Maypajo, Caloocan City.
Interment will be on January 23, 2007 at La Loma Cemetery.

ROOTS AND WINGS

You are the one who said "Go try it"
You said the words "I know you can"
And when I felt like I had blown it
You helped me try again

You gave me roots to grow in love
You gave me wings to reach a star
You set me free to be who I am
Just by being who you are

You were the one that God assigned me
And in your love my life has grown
You were the one whose faith I borrowed
'Till I had found my own

I thank the Lord for who you are
He knew just who I'd need
You loved me just the way I am
And pointed the way, to who I could be

We love you, Daddy...
FROM YOUR LOVING CHILDREN

Our Beloved

ERNESTO B. BALGOS, SR.

September 19, 1937 – January 14, 2007

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 14, 2007 at the age of 69.

His wife **Perla C. Balgos**; children **Beth**, **Evelyn** (†), **Edu**, **Jun-jun**, **Elvie**, **Edna**, **Geeh** & **Erwin**; relatives & friends request prayers of comfort for the bereaved family.

His body lies in Edu's Residence, Homestead, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya.

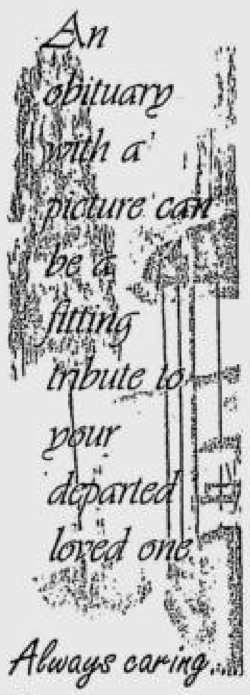
Service will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2007 at 8:00 a.m.
Interment will follow at Golden Dove Memorial, Buag, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya.

"I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing." Genesis 12:2

SIXTO F. BIASON

*Peacefully joined his Creator and his wife **Cleofas** on January 17, 2007 at the age of 85.*

His children, **Lito**, **Gloria** and **Robert**, **Mael** and **Nanette**; his grandchildren, **Aya**, **Jolo**, **Rob**, **Lauren** and **Caitlyn**; sisters, relatives and friends request for prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.
His remains lie in state at the Ascension Chapel, Claret Church, UP Village, Quezon City.
Interment will be on Sunday, January 21, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 am Mass.


An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

Teotima L. Listanco

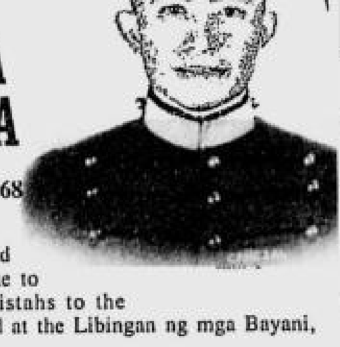
April 20, 1935 - Jan. 16, 2007

Her body lies at her residence in Poktol, Daraga, Albay.

Her husband, children and relatives request friends and pious readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Interment will be on January 21 at Prestine Memorial after the 2 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church, Tahao Rd., Legazpi City.

"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want...
.... Though I walk through the shadow of the valley of Death, I will fear no evil..."
Psalms 23



COL EUFRACIO A CANEZAL (INF) PA

PMA "QUIS SEPARABIT" CLASS '68
(March 04, 1943 – January 15, 2007)

The family of COL CANEZAL and members of PMA Class '68 would like to invite his colleagues, friends and mistahs to the Funeral Services and Honors to be held at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila.

Necrological Service:
Date/Time: January 19, 2007 / 7:00 PM
Venue: Libingan ng mga Bayani Mortuary

Funeral Service and Honors:

Funeral Service:	Date/Time:	January 20, 2007 / 9:00 AM
	Venue:	LNMB Mortuary
Interment:	Date/Time:	January 20, 2007 / 12:00 Noon
	Venue:	LNMB Gravesite

Liwayway M. Calalang

FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF LABOR

of Sampaloc, Manila and Malolos, Bulacan
(October 9, 1931 - January 16, 2007)

Her brothers and sisters and in-laws: † **Fausto** and **Mercedes**, † **Bayani** and **Esperanza**, **Ligaya** and **Cornelio**, **Priscillio** and **Andrea**, **Lualhati** and **Demetrio**, **Prospero** and **Norma**, nephews, nieces, cousins, other relatives and friends, request the pious readers to join them in prayers for her happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at Imperial Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City - Tuesday till Thursday, and will be transferred to Barasoain Church, Malolos, Bulacan on Friday morning till Sunday.

Interment is on January 21, 2007 at the Malolos Memorial Park, Malolos, Bulacan at 9:00 a.m.

Mass starts at 8:00 a.m.

"I have fought the Fight
I have finished the Race
I have kept the Faith"

- 2nd Letter of St. Paul to Timothy

With deepest sorrow and heartfelt grief, we announce the passing of

Rodolfo "Totoy" Braganza Nidea

of GSIS Matina, Davao City
(August 13, 1955 – January 17, 2007)

who peacefully joined our Creator on January 17, 2007 at the age of 51.

His bereaved parents, ***Napoleon+*** and ***Inocentes***, caring siblings, ***Bobong, Yoly, Julius, Prescy, Philip, Annie+*** and ***Maricar***, brother-in-law, ***Bobby***, sisters-in-law, ***Susan*** and ***Maling***, nephews, ***Michael, Marco,*** and ***Nico***, nieces, ***Ann-Ann, Kristy, Patitat, Chee, Niña,*** and ***Maika***, and loving partner, ***Carol***

request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul. His body lies in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Home, Davao City.

Interment will be on January 22, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. at Davao Memorial Park.

Pacita "Paz" Tan-Guevarra

(widow of Col Edgar G Guevarra, PC ret.)

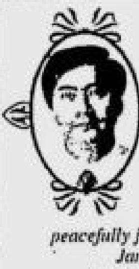
Passed away on January 13, 2007.

The bereaved children: Tarhata & Albert Cera, Medz & Capt. Eusebio Guevarra, Rosemarie & Francis Balde, Tess and Joy Guevarra and their children, Don & Jane Guevarra; sisters, Nena Ramos, Beth Raymundo and Dr. Remy Tan-Paredes request for your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Love Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., #12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be at The Garden of Devotion, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after a 9:30 a.m. Mass, January 20, 2007 at Arlington.

In Christ all shall be made alive ....
Corinthians 15:22



JOAQUIN S. DOMINGO

President, Allkey International Inc.

peacefully joined his Creator on the 16th day of January 2007 at the age of 56 in Asian Hospital and Medical Center.

He shall be missed by his dearest wife **OLGA**; children **Ginger Faye**, **Orange Faye** & **Jefferson**; his grandchildren **Marishka Faith** and **Jose Lorenzo** request your prayers for eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Sanctuarium, No. 739 G Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will take place on Saturday, the 20th of January 2007 after the 8am mass.

BUSINESS

Public sector deficit down to ₱7B from ₱71B

Data reflects CPSD downturn in 9 months to Sept.

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC sector deficit (CPSD) hit P7.412 billion in January to September last year, a sharp 90-percent reduction from the P71.221 billion recorded in the same period the previous year.

CSPD is the combined deficit of the national government, local government units, and state-owned firms. It therefore describes the fiscal condition of the entire government.

The drop in the CPSD is a result of the substantial reduction in the national government's budget deficit and the budget surpluses posted by local government units and state-owned financial institutions.

The Department of Finance showed that the national government registered a budget deficit of only P50.409 billion in the first three quarters of 2006. This represented a 54-percent drop from the P108.478 billion it recorded in the same period of the previous year.

Government-owned and -controlled corporations monitored by the DOF registered a P29-billion deficit, the same as that of the previous year. The GOCCs monitored by the DOF include the National Power Corp., the National Food Authority and the Light Rail Transit Authority.

Social security institutions (SSIs) recorded a surplus of P41.994 billion, 13-percent higher than the previous year's P37.272 billion. The SSIs include the Social Security System, the Government Service Insurance System and Philhealth.

Surplus of government financial institutions hit P4.494 billion compared with the previous year's P4.598 billion. Surplus of local government units hit P27.806 billion from the P20.418 billion of the previous year.

A report from the DOF also showed that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) recorded a deficit of P9.792 billion, a turnaround from the P9.338-billion surplus of the previous year. The deficit of the BSP was attributed to the dividends it paid to the national government and the appreciation of the peso, which pulled down the value of its foreign-denominated investments.

Another deficit input in the public sector's fiscal position was the government's payment for the debts of the old central bank worth P10.499 billion.

On the other hand, other surplus items in the report on the public sector fiscal position included the P13.28-billion worth of adjustments of net lending and equity to GOCCs, and the P4.97-billion worth of adjustment of interest payments to the BSP. Adjustments are the corrections made to update preliminary computations.

The country's public sector holdings had consistently been on the deficit. In 1997, the deficit amounted to P19.47 billion and continued to grow until it reached P233.46 billion in 2004.

A drop, however, was first recorded last year, when the deficit fell to only P97.5 billion, following the implementation of several revenue-enhancement measures by the national government.

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BSP's 10-mo 'paper loss' hit ₱8.4B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS incurred a net loss of P8.4 billion from January to October last year due to foreign exchange rate fluctuations.

It was a reversal of the P11.72 billion in net profit which the BSP posted during the comparative period in 2005.

BSP data showed that the country's central monetary institution generated P43.93 billion in total revenues, and incurred P43.22 billion in total expenses during the 10-month period, thus yielding P710 million in net income, excluding gains and losses on foreign exchange fluctuations.

But during the same period, the BSP incurred P5.07 billion in foreign exchange losses—a turnaround from the P7-billion foreign exchange gains registered in the same period last year. These losses weighed down the net income during the period.

This developed as the peso ended 2006 on a high note alongside favorable macroeconomic prospects and a surge in overseas Filipino workers' remittances, gaining by about 7.6 percent, or four pesos, since the start of 2006 to close the year at 49.03 to the US dollar.

BSP officials explained that the "paper" loss arising from forex volatility could be offset if the government were to provide the remaining P40-billion capitalization that the central bank was entitled to under its charter.

The officials also said the 10-month loss would not automatically mean that the institution was in the red for the whole of 2006.

In 2005, the BSP posted a net profit of P8.04 billion, up from the P5.25 billion net earnings recorded in 2004.

US-based Goldman Sachs earlier suggested that the revival of the tiering system on overnight money last November might have been prompted by the BSP's "short-term profit and loss reasons."

Tiering, in effect a monetary easing, is a system whereby the BSP pays a lower rate to short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels, to encourage banks to lend out instead of parking all their funds with the monetary authority.

Monetary easing, in turn, usually slows down the appreciation of the local currency.

But other banking sources said chalking up profits was not BSP's goal in the first place. They said central banks are established to provide stability to the economy by preserving the value of the currency and maintaining the soundness of the financial system.

As of end-October, the BSP's total assets amounted to P1.5 trillion as of end-October. The biggest bulk, or P1.11 trillion, was in foreign exchange receivables.

As the US dollar has significantly weakened against the peso and other currencies, assets denominated in US dollars were expected to have incurred foreign exchange losses.

Meanwhile, the BSP has P168.14 billion of its assets in domestic securities and P120.6 billion in loans and advances.

On the other hand, the BSP's liabilities during the same period amounted to P1.24 trillion, yielding a net worth of P256.24 billion. Substracting the BSP's seed capital of P10 billion, this still leaves the central bank with a total surplus or reserves of P246.24 billion.

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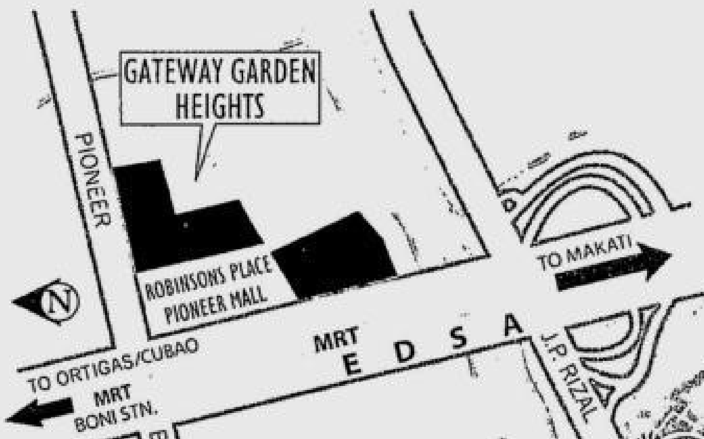

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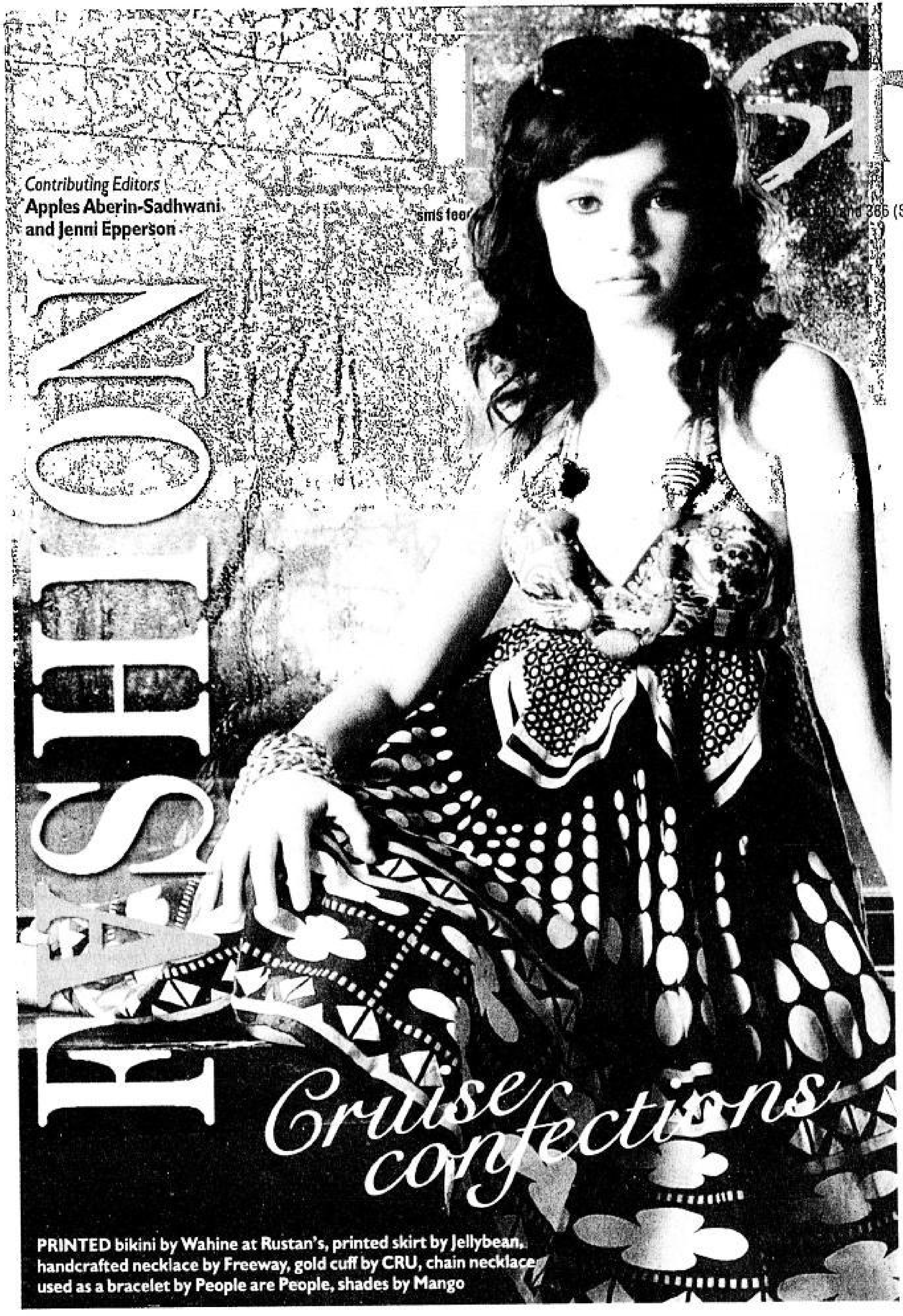

Cruise confections

PRINTED bikini by Wahine at Rustan's, printed skirt by Jellybean, handcrafted necklace by Freeway, gold cuff by CRU, chain necklace used as a bracelet by People are People, shades by Mango

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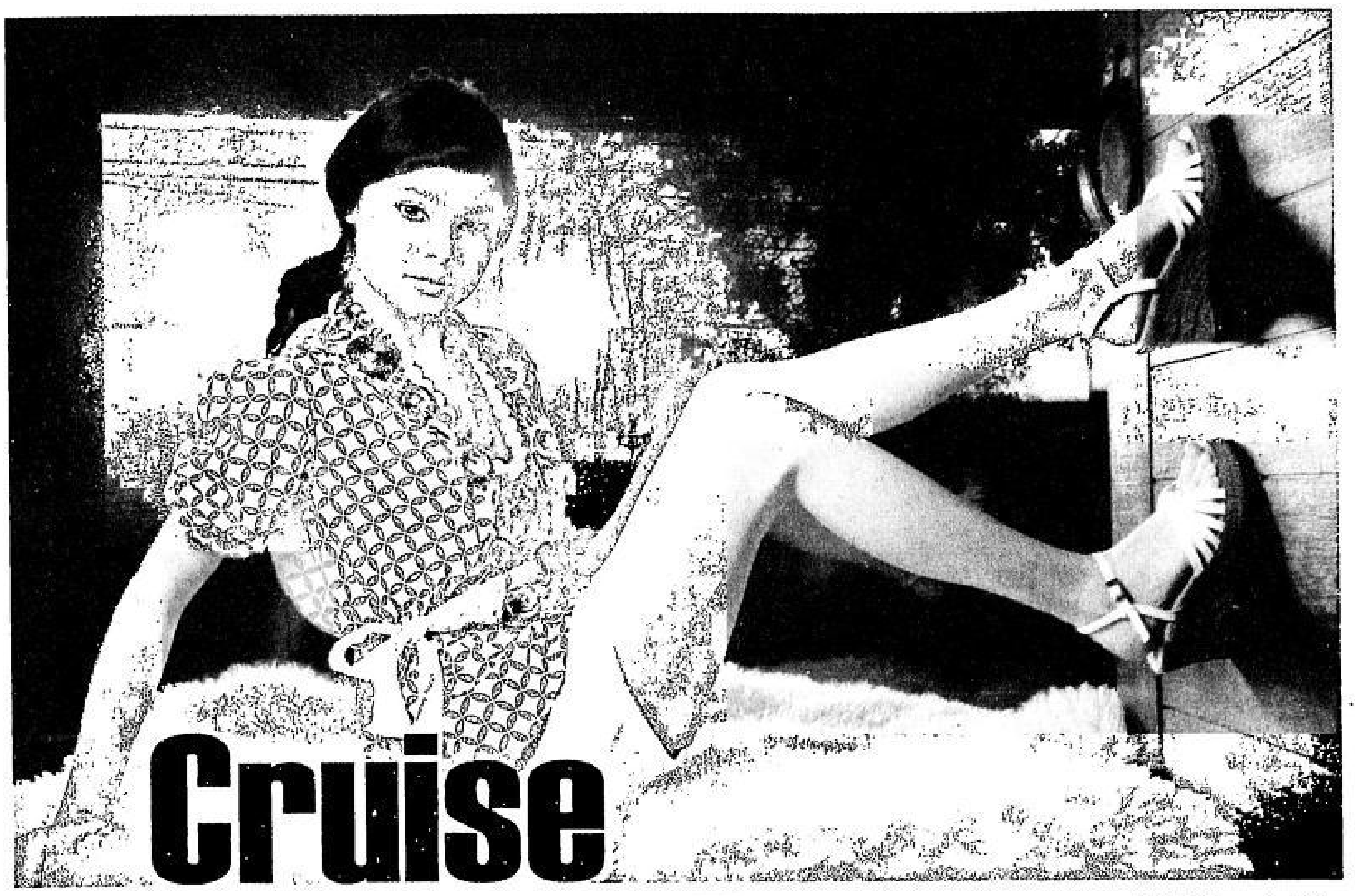
Cruise confections

PRINTED chiffon dress by Charina Sarte, white bikini by Freeway, layered necklaces by Esprit, gold belt by Mango, gold cuff by CRU



PRINTED top by Eight One, white shorts by Tan Gan, red gum-ball and wooden necklaces by Eight One, white gum-ball necklace by Irene's Closet, white wedges by Freeway

WHITE shirt by Jellybean, yellow bathing suit by Eric de los Santos, gold chain necklace used as a belt by Eight One

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

PARIS HILTON JETTED OFF to sunny Bondai Beach in Sydney during the height of winter in the US, while Catherine Zeta-Jones was spotted in St. Bart's in the Caribbean. Jessica Biel displayed toned abs on the beaches of Hawaii and even boxer Eric Morales hied off to Tony Amanpulo just a week ago.

Yes, cruise season is definitely upon us, so travelers around the world are off to exotic locales to soak up the sun. To meet the demands of these ever-fashionable jetsetters, fashion houses like Louis Vuitton and Gucci came out with cruise collections composed of summery items that were sold in boutiques during the freezing winter months.

Louis Vuitton came up with its sought-after Azur collection, while Gucci's Frida Giannini designed flirty printed pieces and light-colored bamboo-accented bags and shoes that are ideal "getaway gear."

Even local city-dwellers are gearing up for weekend jaunts to Palawan, Boracay and Cebu, to name but a few hotspots. And although it's cruise season in the Philippines all year round, it's always fun to know and follow the latest trends.

"Sizzle in bright swimsuits, luxed-up sandals and spirited accessories. Graphic prints in chiffon will go well with your gleaming tan as well," says stylist Maureen Disini. As a prelude to summer, she espouses the use of bright colors and flowing pieces to bring out one's inner beach goddess.

Of course, one need not spend too much hard-earned money to look fashionable. Although designer pieces are tempting buys, there are a slew of stylish yet affordable options out in the retail market.

Take your cue from INQUIRER Fashion, as we present a combination of up-to-the-minute and fun pieces that are perfect picks for your very own getaway.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

**Photography Erwin Barleta/Edge of Light
Styling Maureen Disini
Makeup Xeng Zulueta using Shu Uemura's Spring/Summer 2007 Paradox
Hair Janet de Rama
Model Caroline Ruegg/
Dix and Jean Productions**

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Ang Saya!

PRINTED top (worn as a dress) and brown belt by **eight one**, charm bracelet by **Aranaz**, blue bracelet by **Topshop**, gold ring by **CRU**, sandals by **Freeway**

SHOUTOUT

Fashion back-to-back!

WHAT: The Philippine Fashion Design Competition and Fashion Design Council of the Philippines Trends Show
WHEN: Feb. 8, 6 p.m.
WHERE: Glorietta Activity Center

WHAT: Hiblang Filipina Fashion Gala produced by the National Federation of Women's Clubs Foundation
WHEN: Feb. 16, 7 p.m.
WHERE: Fiesta Pavilion, Manila Hotel
Featured Designers: Ben Farrales, Patis Tesoro, JC Buendia, Jojie Lloren, Randy Ortiz, Rajo Laurel, Steve de Leon, Gerry Katigbak, Edgar Madamba, Barge Ramos, Jon Herrera, Philip Rodriguez, Garimon Roferos, Federico Navarro

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WITH a *maiko* in Gion

SUNAO Kuwahara with the Asia 5 designers

SHIBUYA girls

Memoirs of a fashion designer

By Jojie Lloren
Contributor

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We explained our collections to the show's dressers. They asked us all the details, including how we want the clothes pressed and hanged. So professional! That morning, we were able to finalize the sequencing, hair and makeup, shoes (some were provided by the school), etc.

ERI Utsugi and the author

We also took a tour of the school. I was very impressed! They have big classrooms, modern equipment, a supply store, a jewelry workshop, an exhibit area, a big multipurpose hall where the show was held, and many more! It is actually a cluster of small buildings that line up both sides of a street named after the school.

After lunch, we headed to the Shiseido training center. We were shown the magic mirror. It's a machine you stand in front of, and with a push of a button, your reflection on the mirror would have whatever makeup you chose from their current trend board. There was also a machine that made lipstick in the color of your choice, right in front of you. So hi-tech!

Next stop was Shibuya, where you would see young people everywhere. Siti, our mother hen, brought us to Shibuya 109, a seven-story building that houses hundreds of stores that sell only ladies' clothes. It was here that I saw very trendy, yet inexpensive, clothes.

Friday, Dec. 8

We just walked to Nuno this morning as it is just along Roppongi. Nuno is a fabric store and we were able to meet its designer and director, Reiko Sudo. She answered our questions and let us touch and feel the materials and other items in the store. Nuno sells Philippine fabrics like piña and abaca.

Our next stop was A-net, a company that owns different garment labels. It shares the building with Issey Miyake. We met with two of A-net's young designers, the perky Eri Utsugi of Mercibeaucoup and the serious Sunao Kuwahara of sunaokuwahara. They have a very inspiring story, as they have a lot of stores already and are soon going into exports.

Next was the Japan Creation, a fabric trade fair, much like the Premiere Vision in Paris. It was the last day and we arrived at the last hour, so we did not really see much; just the trend settings. I observed that most fabrics were highly textural and used a lot of hitech materials.

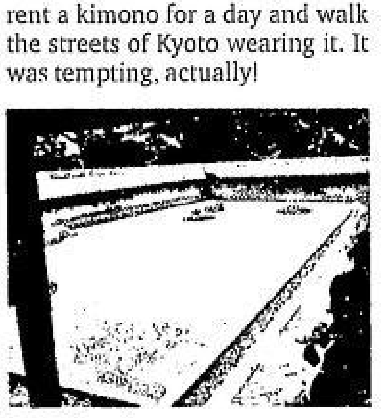
Saturday, Dec. 9

It took 3 hours for the bullet train to arrive in Osaka. We were welcomed there by Mrs. Khanittha Matsuo. She brought us around a place called Karahori, where moderately sized houses were turned into mini shopping arcades. Tiny corners are rented out to young designers at very minimal costs. One shop we entered had a shelf divided into 1-sq ft boxes that the owner sublets for a meager 1,000 yen/box/month.

Sunday, Dec. 10

In Kyoto, we visited the Kodai Yuzen-en and Gallery. On display were yuzen-printed kimonos as old as 150 years. Yuzen-zome is a stencil/resist-dyeing method used to create prints on kimono fabrics.

We then proceeded to the Nishijin Textile Center. We were treated to a fashion show of modern kimonos and hand-weaving demonstrations. Here you can rent a kimono for a day and walk the streets of Kyoto wearing it. It was tempting, actually!


ROCK garden

Monday, Dec. 11

We went back again to Gion in the afternoon and we were treated to a beautiful sight—a geisha! We must have looked funny, or scary even, as we followed the poor lady around!

The late afternoon found us in a place where they taught the shibori method of printing designs on fabrics. This is Japanese tie-dye—a very laborious process done solely by hand or with the use of a tool. A silk scarf costs P5,000.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

We arrived in Tokyo just before lunch, and headed straight to the Ginza Kimono Gallery. The owner, Mr. Taizoh Takahashi, and his wife showed us their very expensive products—the real modern kimono. They make kimonos for the royal family and one kimono costs 20 million yen! An obi fetches 150,000 yen!

Wednesday, Dec. 13

Rested and having had enough sleep, we got on the van to go to Kiryu. This is a small town, located two hours away from Tokyo, that is home to a lot of textile manufacturers and the world-famous textile artist Mr. Junichi Arai, who designs for Miyake, Kawakubo and Yamamoto, to name a few. We went straight to his house, where he welcomed us and talked a bit about his work. He told me he had been to the Philippines a lot of times before. I saw some Ifugao rice gods and fabrics in his collection.

Mr. Arai brought us to the textile research institute, where he experiments with fabrics. He showed us the printing method he was working on that time, using a synthetic fabric that is supposedly thinner and stronger than silk. After touring the entire facility, we hied off to the Kiryu Trade Center and then on to Kasamori, a fabric manufacturer specializing in embroidery.

Thursday, Dec. 14

Mme. Teiko Utsumi, director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum, greeted us at the doorway, and personally toured us around the two floors of the traditional Japanese-style building. Pieces on exhibit were part of the vast art collection on the museum's founder, Muneyoshi Yanagi. These are works done by anonymous craftsmen. We were also given a lecture on *basho-fu*, a fabric native to Okinawa that is made of banana fiber.

Friday, Dec. 15

We were at Doreme at exactly 9 a.m. for the dress rehearsal. The Asian designers' collections made up the first part, followed by the creations of the students of Doreme. It was like the actual show, save for the models' unmade-up faces. Some changes were made in the styling, and then we practiced our curtain call.

There were two shows. The first one, set at 2 p.m., had students for an audience. The press, representatives from the diplomatic corps and industry players were invited to the 4 p.m. show.

The backstage was small, but it amply accommodated six racks of clothes, six models, 12 dressers and two production assistants. I saw how orderly the backstage area was, and how efficient the dressers were. I did not see any one of the 55 clothes being thrown about, and there was complete silence. Dressers wore socks on what seemed to be tatami mats on the floor. Incredible!

A reception was held at the school cafeteria-turned-bar where we met Mr. Kansai Yamamoto! Mr. and Mrs. Junichi Arai came all the way from Kiryu with Yoko Hatakeyama and Rie Chiba, both textile designers we met in Kiryu.

I was also introduced to Mr. Masahiro Kubo, editor in chief of Senken Simbun Co. Ltd.; Mr. Kazuo Kurobe, general manager of Onward Kashiyama Co. Ltd.; Mr. Hayato Abe, president of Whichi Design Inc., to namedrop a few.

Saturday, Dec. 16

I did some last-minute shopping in the morning… sushi lunch… packed my things… dressed up for the dinner Doreme hosted for us at the Bluepoint along the uppity Platinum Road. Madame Toko gifted me with a necklace of hers that I complimented; I love you, *sensei*!

Sunday, Dec. 17

Sayonara, Japan! The past 12 days were very hectic and exhausting, but I would gladly do it over and over again!

I was told that this was the first time the Japan Foundation invited people from the field of fashion, and that this is their most expensive project to date. We, the five Asian designers, agreed that the foundation, through this project, succeeded in enhancing our awareness of the Japanese culture and people, and, therefore, deepened mutual understanding not only between Japan and our respective countries, but also among ourselves.

My heartfelt thanks to the Japan Foundation, with special mention to Mr. Junichi Tomioka, Siti-san of Japan Foundation Tokyo; Mr. Ben Suzuki, Ms Bambi Diaz of Japan Foundation Manila; Mme. Toko Ninomiya, Mr. Kenneth Oh, and the rest of the Doreme Suginogakuen faculty.

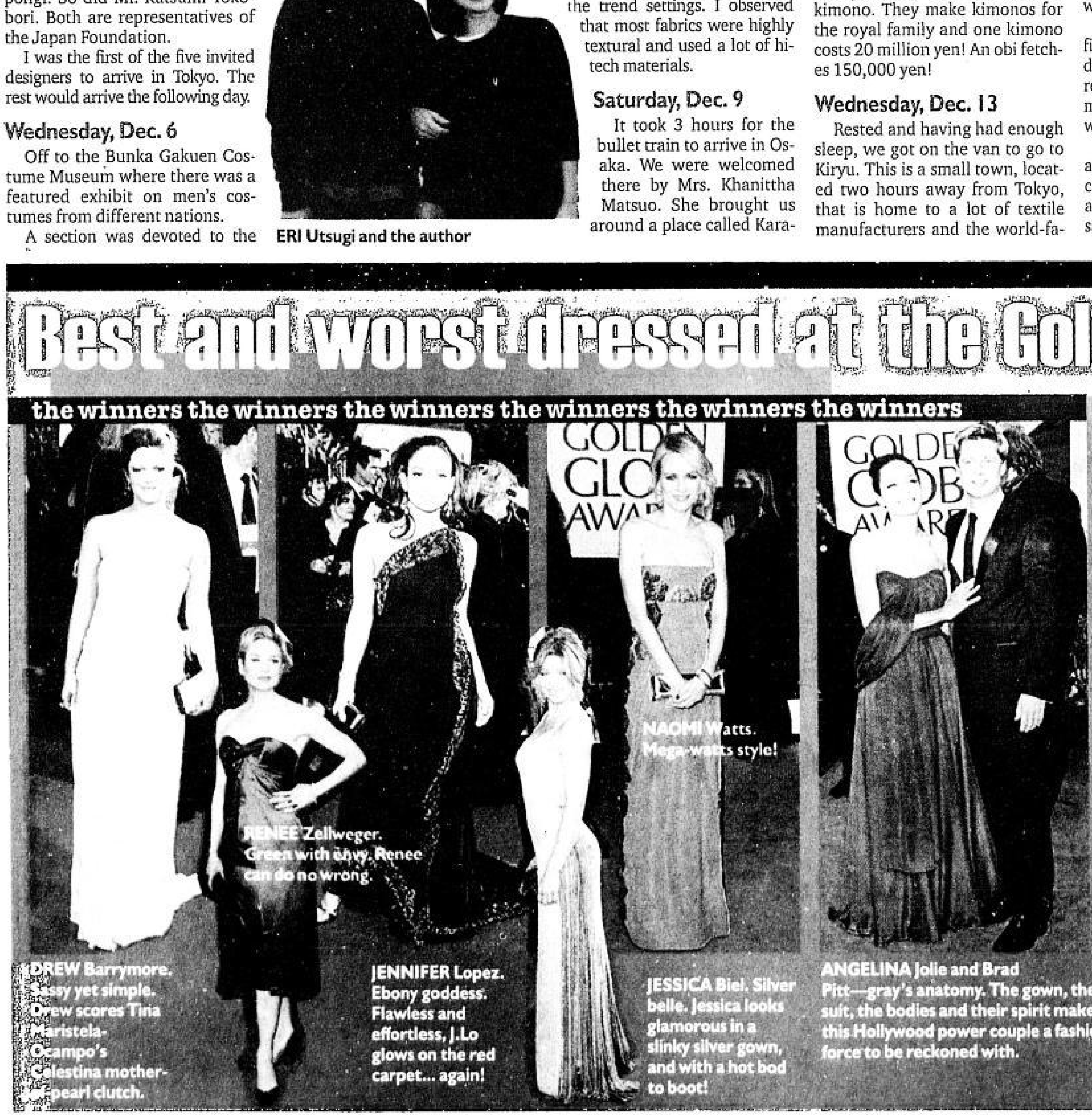
Best and worst dressed at the Golden Globes

the winners the winners the winners the winners the winners the winners

INQUIRER FASHION takes you front and center as we make our picks for this year's best and worst dressed at the Golden Globes. Quite a number of celebrities played it safe by donning understated gowns in muted tones. Then there were the handful who stood out (like a sore thumb, at times!) in dazzling metallics.

But, of course, there were winners like Angelina Jolie in Brad Pitt's arms, as well as [illegible] non-winners like Patricia Arquette. Her leather and taffeta dress was simply [illegible] unflattering! What was she thinking?

The envelope please…


DREW Barrymore. Sassy yet simple. Drew scores Tina Maristela-Ocampo's Celestina mother-of-pearl clutch.

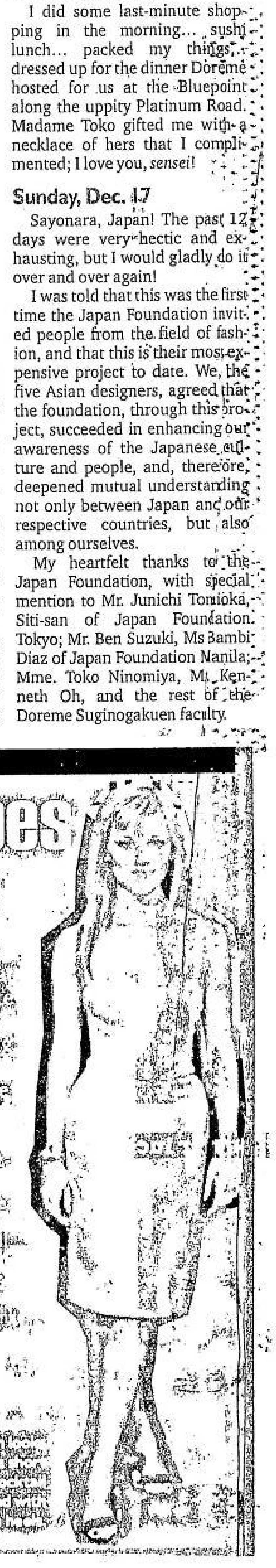
RENEE Zellweger. Green with envy, Renee can do no wrong.

JENNIFER Lopez. Ebony goddess. Flawless and effortless, J.Lo glows on the red carpet… again!

JESSICA Biel. Silver belle. Jessica looks glamorous in a slinky silver gown, and with a hot bod to boot!

NAOMI Watts. Mega-watts style!

ANGELINA Jolie and Brad Pitt—gray's anatomy. The gown, the suit, the bodies and their spirit make this Hollywood power couple a fashion force to be reckoned with.


REESE Witherspoon looks regal even in a short canary yellow cocktail dress combined with quirky red high heels.

OSCAR, Pouk, Siti, Me, Mr. Yokobori, Anuj, Nazleen

WITH a *maiko* in Gion

SUNAO Kuwahara with the Asia 5 designers

SHIBUYA girls

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ERI Utsugi and the author

We also took a tour of the school. I was very impressed! They have big classrooms, modern equipment, a supply store, a jewelry workshop, an exhibit area, a big multipurpose hall where the show was held, and many more! It is actually a cluster of small buildings that line up both sides of a street named after the school.

After lunch, we headed to the Shiseido training center. We were shown the magic mirror. It's a machine you stand in front of, and with a push of a button, your reflection on the mirror would have whatever makeup you chose from their current trend board. There was also a machine that made lipstick in the color of your choice, right in front of you. So hi-tech!

Next stop was Shibuya, where you would see young people everywhere. Siti, our mother hen, brought us to Shibuya 109, a seven-story building that houses hundreds of stores that sell only ladies' clothes. It was here that I saw very trendy, yet inexpensive, clothes.

Friday, Dec. 8

We just walked to Nuno this morning as it is just along Roppongi. Nuno is a fabric store and we were able to meet its designer and director, Reiko Sudo. She answered our questions and let us touch and feel the materials and other items in the store. Nuno sells Philippine fabrics like piña and abaca.

Our next stop was A-net, a company that owns different garment labels. It shares the building with Issey Miyake. We met with two of A-net's young designers, the perky Eri Utsugi of Mercibeaucoup and the serious Sunao Kuwahara of sunaokuwahara. They have a very inspiring story, as they have a lot of stores already and are soon going into exports.

Next was the Japan Creation, a fabric trade fair, much like the Premiere Vision in Paris. It was the last day and we arrived at the last hour, so we did not really see much; just the trend settings. I observed that most fabrics were highly textural and used a lot of hi-tech materials.

Saturday, Dec 9

It took 3 hours for the bullet train to arrive in Osaka. We were welcomed there by Mrs. Khanittha Matsuo. She brought us around a place called Karahori, where moderately sized houses were turned into mini shopping arcades. Tiny corners are rented out to young designers at very minimal costs. One shop we entered had a shelf divided into 1-sq ft boxes that the owner sublets for a meager 1,000 yen/box/month.

Sunday, Dec. 10

In Kyoto, we visited the Kodai Yuzen-en and Gallery. On display were yuzen-printed kimonos as old as 150 years. Yuzen-zome is a stencil/resist-dyeing method used to create prints on kimono fabrics.

We then proceeded to the Nishijin Textile Center. We were treated to a fashion show of modern kimonos and hand-weaving demonstrations. Here you can rent a kimono for a day and walk the streets of Kyoto wearing it. It was tempting, actually!

ROCK garden

Monday, Dec. 11

We went back again to Gion in the afternoon and we were treated to a beautiful sight—a geisha! We must have looked funny, or scary even, as we followed the poor lady around!

The late afternoon found us in a place where they taught the shibori method of printing designs on fabrics. This is Japanese tie-dye—a very laborious process done solely by hand or with the use of a tool. A silk scarf costs P5,000.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

We arrived in Tokyo just before lunch, and headed straight to the Ginza Kimono Gallery. The owner, Mr. Taizoh Takahashi, and his wife showed us their very expensive products—the real modern kimono. They make kimonos for the royal family and one kimono costs 20 million yen! An obi fetches 150,000 yen!

Wednesday, Dec. 13

Rested and having had enough sleep, we got on the van to go to Kiryu. This is a small town, located two hours away from Tokyo, that is home to a lot of textile manufacturers and the world-famous textile artist Mr. Junichi Arai, who designs for Miyake, Kawakubo and Yamamoto, to name a few. We went straight to his house, where he welcomed us and talked a bit about his work. He told me he had been to the Philippines a lot of times before. I saw some Ifugao rice gods and fabrics in his collection.

Mr. Arai brought us to the textile research institute, where he experiments with fabrics. He showed us the printing method he was working on that time, using a synthetic fabric that is supposedly thinner and stronger than silk. After touring the entire facility, we hied off to the Kiryu Trade Center and then on to Kasamori, a fabric manufacturer specializing in embroidery.

Thursday Dec

Mme. Teiko Utsumi, director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum, greeted us at the doorway, and personally toured us around the two floors of the traditional Japanese-style building. Pieces on exhibit were part of the vast art collection on the museum's founder, Muneyoshi Yanagi. These are works done by anonymous craftsmen. We were also given a lecture on *basho-fu*, a fabric native to Okinawa that is made of banana fiber.

Friday, Dec

We were at Doreme at exactly 9 a.m. for the dress rehearsal. The Asian designers' collections made up the first part, followed by the creations of the students of Doreme. It was like the actual show, save for the models' unmade-up faces. Some changes were made in the styling, and then we practiced our curtain call.

There were two shows. The first one, set at 2 p.m., had students for an audience. The press, representatives from the diplomatic corps and industry players were invited to the 4 p.m. show.

The backstage was small, but it amply accommodated six racks of clothes, six models, 12 dressers and two production assistants. I saw how orderly the backstage area was, and how efficient the dressers were. I did not see any one of the 55 clothes being thrown about, and there was complete silence. Dressers wore socks on what seemed to be tatami mats on the floor. Incredible!

A reception was held at the school cafeteria-turned-bar where we met Mr. Kansai Yamamoto! Mr. and Mrs. Junichi Arai came all the way from Kiryu with Yoko Hatakeyama and Rie Chiba, both textile designers we met in Kiryu.

I was also introduced to Mr. Masahiro Kubo, editor in chief of Senken Simbun Co. Ltd.; Mr. Kazuo Kurobe, general manager of Onward Kashiyama Co. Ltd.; Mr. Hayato Abe, president of Whichi Design Inc., to namedrop a few.

[illegible] Dec

I did some last-minute shopping in the morning… sushi lunch… packed my things… dressed up for the dinner Doreme hosted for us at the Bluepoint along the uppity Platinum Road. Madame Toko gifted me with a necklace of hers that I complimented; I love you, *sensei*!

Sunday, Dec 17

Sayonara, Japan! The past 12 days were very hectic and exhausting, but I would gladly do it over and over again!

I was told that this was the first time the Japan Foundation invited people from the field of fashion, and that this is their most expensive project to date. We, the five Asian designers, agreed that the foundation, through this project, succeeded in enhancing our awareness of the Japanese culture and people, and, therefore, deepened mutual understanding not only between Japan and our respective countries, but also among ourselves.

My heartfelt thanks to the Japan Foundation, with special mention to Mr. Junichi Tomioka, Siti-san of Japan Foundation Tokyo; Mr. Ben Suzuki, Ms Bambi Diaz of Japan Foundation Manila; Mme. Toko Ninomiya, Mr. Kenneth Oh, and the rest of the Doreme Suginogakuen faculty.

Best and worst dressed at the Golden Globes

the winners the winners the winners the winners the winners the winners

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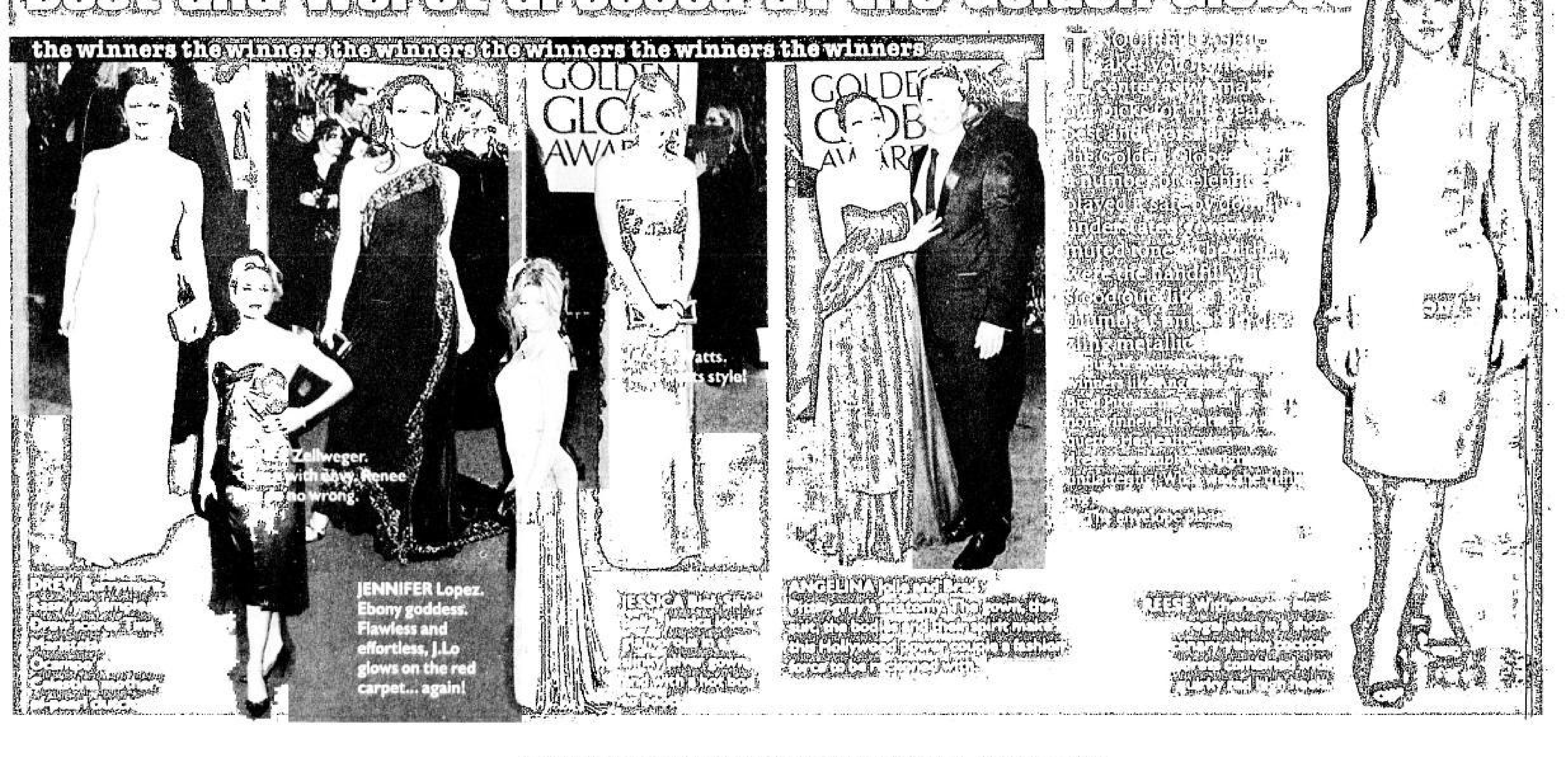


Zellweger. [illegible] with envy. Renee [illegible] no wrong.

[illegible] atts. [illegible] s style!

JENNIFER Lopez. Ebony goddess. Flawless and effortless, J.Lo glows on the red carpet… again!

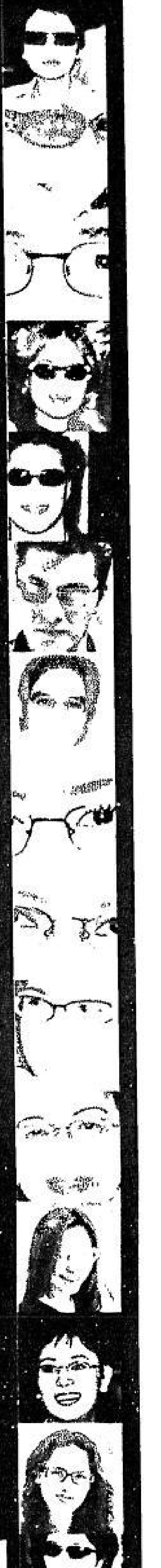
DREW [illegible]

JESSICA [illegible]

ANGELINA [illegible]

[illegible]

RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME



When you look more like 'bangaw' than Bono with your spectacles, it's time to get an eyewear stylist

Eye style

SAY "EYE do" to Dr. Vivian Sarabia, who has styled them all—from the president to young celebrities.

EVEN WHEN THEY'RE trying to escape from the paparazzi, they manage to exude über-cool. How do the likes of MK and Kate do it? By donning the celebrity staple—huge, stylish shades!

So, of course, you snatch those same shades up for yourself and end up looking… absolutely ridiculous: more *bangaw* than Bono. Why is it that on celebs, big shades look so cool, while on your face, they're just cruel?

Times like these call for an eyewear stylist. An eyewear stylist? I can almost hear you ask, and yes, there is such a thing. In fact, there is only one eyewear stylist in the Philippines and she is Dr. Vivian Sarabia.

I first heard of Dr. Sarabia from Randy Santiago. No, we are not close; I was actually tuned in to one of his noontime shows where he regularly thanked Dr. Sarabia for his eyewear. I had forgotten the name of the defunct noontime show, but I never forgot the talented Santiago, his shades and the doctor who gave him his eye style.

Dr. Sarabia has been an eyewear stylist long before Santiago took centerstage. She is, in fact, the eyewear consultant to a whole slew of celebrities, politicians and fashionistas. (If I mentioned all of them here, the list would be longer than this column!)

Her styling philosophy is simple: Eyewear is a means of enhancing one's look, creating a new look or expressing one's personality.

Just think of Clark Kent and his spectacles—didn't you ever wonder how putting on that crucial piece of accessory disguises the Man of Steel from his enemies and everyone else?

"Eyewear is as much about fashion as the latest designer wardrobe," says Dr. Sarabia.

Mabuhay!

Jenni Epperson

Eyewear should be seen as an accessory just like shoes, bags and jewelry. Many times, people can be dressed impeccably but their eyewear wouldn't go with their attire.

Dr. Sarabia helps her clients by drawing out their personalities and finding out more about their lifestyles.

"Styling is more than knowing what style of eyeglasses or shades suit different face shapes, or what brand is hot," she shares.

"Styling is knowing what the client wants, taking into consideration other factors, but more importantly, having a relationship with them—the more you know their personality, the better you can enhance their appearance or moods."

When a patient consults her, she often asks them what look they want, if they want to look chic, trendy, powerful, serious or fun. She takes into consideration the client's hairstyle and color, complexion, attire and, at times, the special occasion they will be attending.

She then makes them fit at least 20 different pairs of eyewear to find out what style suit them best and match their personalities.

In that sense, Dr. Sarabia has elevated eye styling into an art form. Even with advanced technology available today, such as a software which shows virtual eyewear styling, she still doesn't use them because styling is an instinct.

She studies the face of her client and can tell which styles will suit them. In fact, she has this quirky habit of imagining different eyewear on people. Once, to pass the time riding the subway in New York, she'd visualize the passengers with different eyewear!

Yet beyond the art and style is something else that Dr. Sarabia is known for, and that is her special, personal relationship with each of her clients that shows she really care for them as opposed to a clinical encounter.

She gives one-on-one consultation, a way for her to constantly hone her skills. It's not surprising that she gets so many calls a day from celebs, friends and politicians seeking her advice!

Her clientele is not limited to famous people. She loves styling and doing makeovers of ordinary people, and gets a high when she sees them feeling good about themselves. In fact, she once styled a 2bU! reader who was so happy and touched at how she enhanced his look that he asked her to be the *ninang* at his wedding!

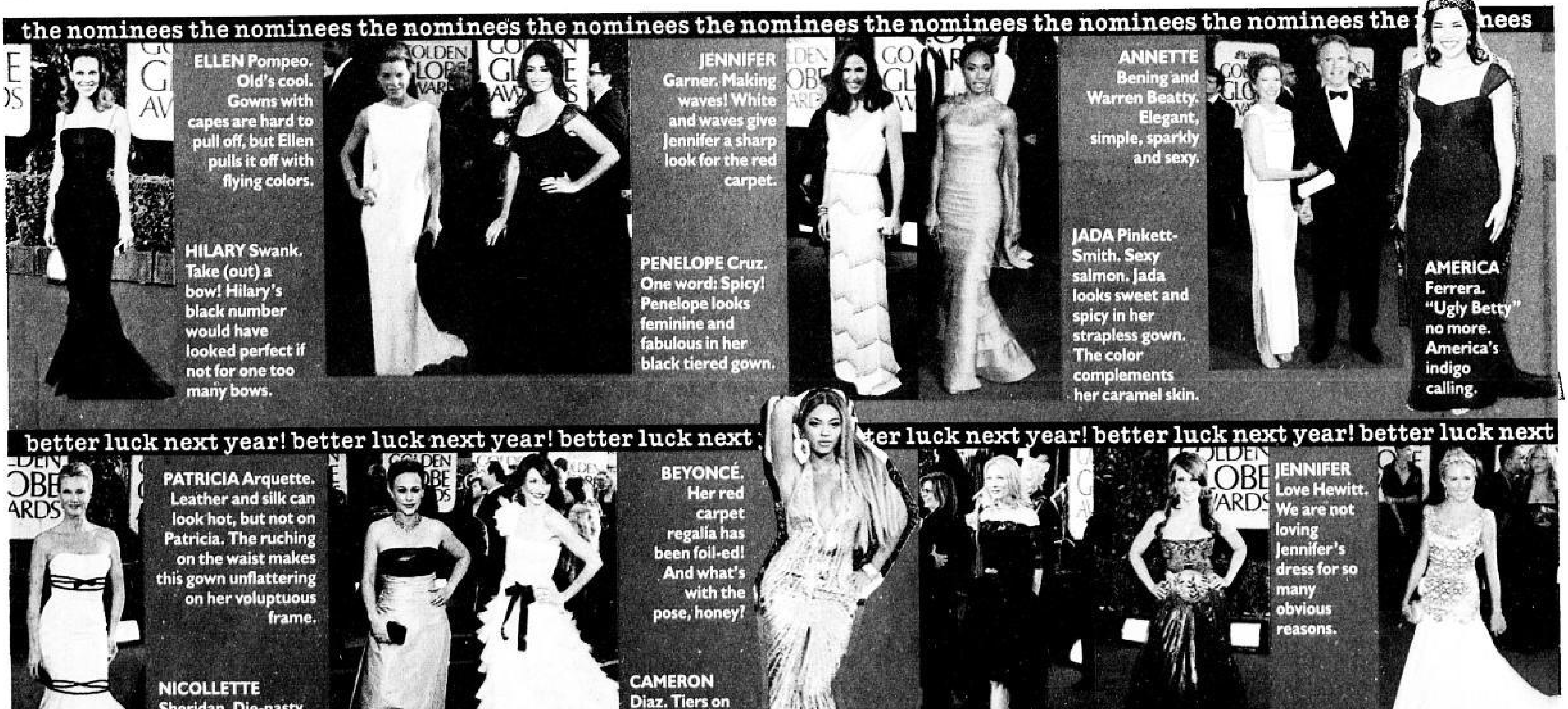
Dr. Sarabia's shops, Vivian Sarabia World of Optics, are more of eyewear boutique than your typical optical shop. And like a fashion boutique, she is the in-house stylist. She is actually in the process of having her doctors' and staff's uniforms redesigned by one of Manila's hot, young designers (I'm proud to say that I was responsible for hooking them up!) Her family has been in the eyewear business for 100 years; her brother in fact owns the ubiquitous Sarabia Optical shops.

So what is Dr. Sarabia's outlook on trends for this New Year? She says that a hot pick would be her lenses that change colors when the sun hits them outdoors, and then remain clear indoor. You can literally look through rose-colored lenses… or even lazuli, lime and other colored glasses!

Another trend in her shops are black-colored contact lenses. While others want to change their eye color by using colored contact lenses, people are taking the cue from the popular Korean *telenovela* stars that wear ebony shade contact lenses. Apparently, they make you look younger.

Got you wide-eyed and curious? Take a trek to one of Dr. Sarabia's six shops in the metropolis. Best to make an appointment first!

E-mail the author at jfashion@yahoo.com



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better luck next year! better luck next year! better luck next year! better luck next year! better luck next year! better luck next

ELLEN Pompeo. Old's cool. Gowns with capes are hard to pull off, but Ellen pulls it off with flying colors.

HILARY Swank. Take (out) a bow! Hilary's black number would have looked perfect if not for one too many bows.

JENNIFER Garner. Making waves! White and waves give Jennifer a sharp look for the red carpet.

PENELOPE Cruz. One word: Spicy! Penelope looks feminine and fabulous in her black tiered gown.

ANNETTE Bening and Warren Beatty. Elegant, simple, sparkly and sexy.

JADA Pinkett-Smith. Sexy salmon. Jada looks sweet and spicy in her strapless gown. The color complements her caramel skin.

AMERICA Ferrera. "Ugly Betty" no more. America's indigo calling.

PATRICIA Arquette. Leather and silk can look hot, but not on Patricia. The ruching on the waist makes this gown unflattering on her voluptuous frame.

NICOLLETTE Sheridan. Die-nasty. Nicollette's '80s-inspired gown doesn't do justice to this Desperate Housewife's svelte body.

BEYONCÉ. Her red carpet regalia has been foil-ed! And what's with the pose, honey?

CAMERON Diaz. Tiers on our pillow! Breaking up with Justin made her into a frill-seeker.

CATE Blanchett. "Huh?" is the long and short of it.

JENNIFER Love Hewitt. We are not loving Jennifer's dress for so many obvious reasons.

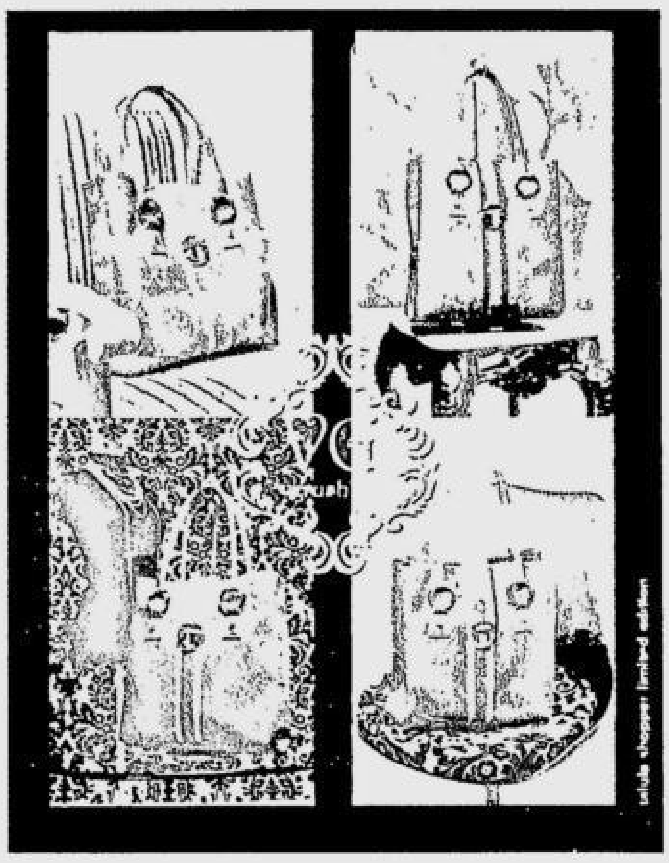
SIENNA Miller. Her boho style is more boo-hoo style for the red carpet. The metallic print looks tacky and her braids don't help.

For the bag lover's consideration

Here's a much-welcome addition to the local fashion/retail industry: Verushka, a collection of bags that's designed and executed by stylish young entrepreneur Verushka Go. "My design philosophy is to provide fashion-savvy women with a sophisticated handbag that's of superior quality, but is still fun and affordable," she says.

Her first collection is called the "Talula Shopper Limited Edition." The handbags are made of genuine cowhide in a very rich caramel tone and accented with vibrant yellow top-stitching. Details include an extended silver buckle tab and hardware and buckle straps in six eye-catching colors, namely, bubblegum pink, lime, eggplant, denim, orange and red.

The Verushka "Talula Shopper Limited Edition" collection is available at Abfit on Jupiter Street, Backstage on Pasay Road and NUR on Timog Avenue. Call/text 0922-8279988 for inquiries.



FASHION BUZZ

Hot, haute, hot news!

Channeling Karl

Fans of Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld can get their hands on more affordable pieces by the world-renowned designer by fall/winter 2007. The Tommy Hilfiger Corp., together with Lagerfeld, is launching a new lifestyle collection called K. The line will include knitwear, trousers, dresses, blazers and outerwear, plus a wide range of five-pocket jeans in black, blue and gray denim and other fabrics.

Jeans will be priced at around US$160 to US$290 while T-shirts will be sold for about US$90. Although the items are still pricey, especially when translated into Philippine pesos, the line is definitely more reasonably priced than brands like Chanel or Karl Lagerfeld.

Drops of Life

A HAPPY LIFE IS A LONG LIFE

He who laughs, lasts.* When you're happy you feel healthy. Well, it's more than a feeling. It's true. And a happy life is a healthy life and a longer life.

THE REAL THING

There's no mystery why you drink Coke every time you're happy, or why you want one when you feel a little low. Coke is the quintessential refreshment. It refreshes you. It refreshes how you feel about yourself and how you feel about life. Every time you open a Coke, you get that one-of-a-kind feeling that lifts your spirit and refreshes your body and soul.

A SMILE IN EVERY DROP

There aren't any studies to prove that drinking Coke will lengthen your life. But we all know that happiness makes you live longer. That's why we put a smile in every Coke you drink and share. So have a Coke and a smile.

We at The Coca-Cola Company think that happiness is like a bottle of Coke. You can't share it with somebody without having some for yourself. That's why you and every one close to you cherish the time-loved taste of Coke, drop by drop. We made Coke to make you smile, and to us every smile counts.

*Mary Pettibone Poole

EVERYONE DESERVES A SMILE

They say that happiness brings better health and helps you live longer. That is why we put a smile in every bottle of Coca-Cola. So every time you open one, you get that one-of-a-kind feeling that lifts your spirit and refreshes your body and soul. Nothing compares with a Coke in hand. So sit back, kick off your shoes, grab a Coke and savor life's every drop. Stay happy.
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The Coca-Cola Company
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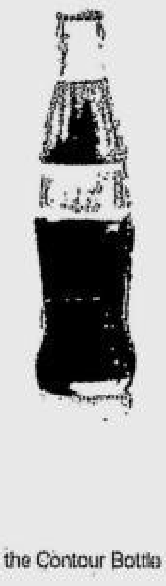

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BEAUTY

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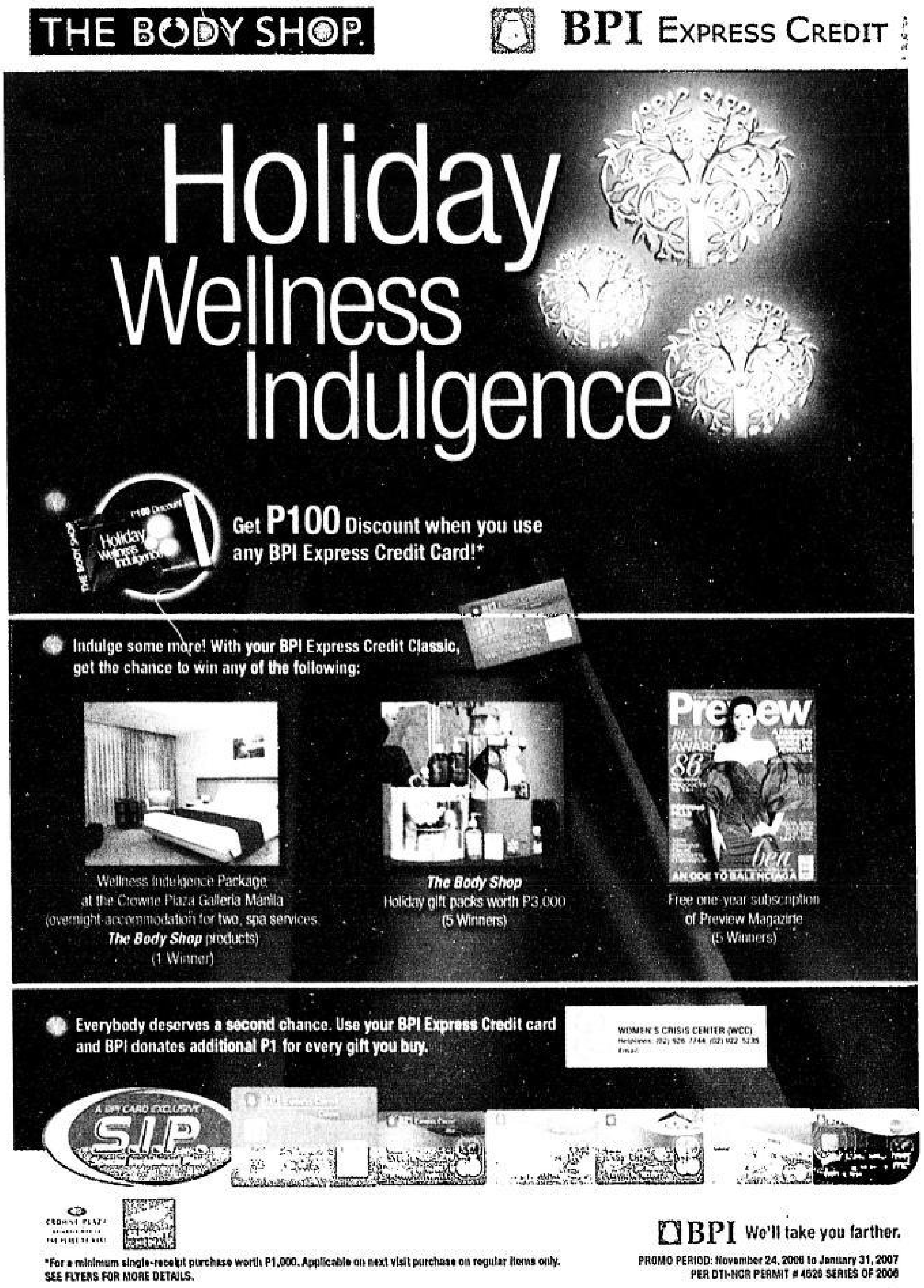

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Star secret revealed

JACKIE Lou Blanco

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

ACTRESS, WRITER, FITNESS enthusiast and hands-on mom Jackie Lou Blanco typifies today's modern women whose daily routine is a constant balance of family life, motherhood, personal needs and career. She toggles this balancing act with panache and remains to be a picture of fresh beauty always.

Her beauty secret? A healthy lifestyle and a French skincare brand called Biorica.

Biorica is the first and only skincare brand that uses the salivary extract of the *Hirudo medicinalis* (medicinal leech) as its main active ingredient.

"I've tried Biorica's Revolution Anti-Age serums, and after just a few uses, I didn't need to put on any concealer. Now, my skin feels great and much tighter. It is really amazing! There's also an excellent product for dark undereye circles and puffiness," says Blanco.

The saliva of the medicinal leech contains enzymes that are powerful anti-coagulants, promoting effective micro-circulation which fights the process of human skin aging. The enzymes work to stimulate cell metabolism and keep skin constantly rejuvenated. Reconstructive and micro-surgeries have long benefited from the anti-coagulation and cell repair properties of the enzymes secreted in the leech's saliva.

Biorica has gone a step further and has managed to integrate these wonder enzymes in a highly effective line of skincare products. It has developed three different levels of concentrations: Hm1, Hm2 and Hm3.

Hm1 contains a regular concentration of the salivary extract. The products under this level are in the form of creams specializing in maintenance and prevention care.

Hm2 contains a processed concentration of the salivary extract that focus on stress care.

Hm3 contains the highest concentration of the salivary extract, and the products under this level are in the form of serums specializing in anti-aging.

Aside from the salivary extract, the products also contain other natural ingredients like shea butter, grapeseed oil, pro-vitamin B5, vitamins A, E and more.

In addition to following the Biorica treatment and maintenance regimen for her skin, Blanco also shares the following tips: "My mother (Pilita Corrales) has always taught me that dealing with stress and maintaining beauty starts with the right attitude. So no matter how bad my day is, I just think that tomorrow is always another day. Smile whenever you can. Stress just makes you old fast."

"Whenever I feel tense, I also de-stress by going to the gym or spend time by myself wandering the aisles in the grocery. I find it so relaxing just walking around the aisles on my own. I also enjoy having an occasional foot spa and facial.

"And of course, there are my children. No matter how noisy they can sometimes be, just knowing that they are there keeps me centered. I feel like I know where I am."

Biorica is exclusively available in Rustan's Essenses.

Ask your dermatologist about Biorica's prescriptive line.

This actress, writer, fitness enthusiast and hands-on mom swears by a healthy lifestyle and a French skincare brand called Biorica

Mood-dependent eye color

FRESHLOOK COLORED LENSES are the preferred contact lenses of Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman. Hues of hazel and brown of FreshLook Colorblends lenses work well with Lara's *morena* skin and gives her a whole new look.

FreshLook Cosmetic Contact Lenses are available in a variety of colors, including the best-selling blue, green and brown hues. They use a proprietary pearlescent effect that illuminates both light and dark eyes without changing their natural color. The lens design features an inner starburst pattern that adds a beautiful twinkle to the eye, and a charcoal outline that provides definition, giving the entire face a natural radiance.

MAKE your eyes work for you.

With the new thermal cure manufacturing process and ultra violet absorber, FreshLook Cosmetic Contact Lenses have also been made more comfortable. On-eye lens movement is reduced, thus providing optimal centering of the lens on eye for a perfect fit. With the addition of an ultra violet absorber, the lenses now help protect eyes from harmful UV rays.

Explore your own individuality and see the world with brighter eyes in FreshLook ColorBlends. FreshLook ColorBlends Twinset are at only P1,995 for two sets.

Visit www.bettereyesforbetterlife.com.

BLOOM with blue.

The slim commandments

By Carla Sibal
Contributor

ISN'T IT IRONIC THAT MOST OF us head to the beach after all the dietary misconduct we committed last December? After binging, we agonize how we'd look like when we finally hit the beach where we have to don swimsuits.

My last particular jaunt was made even more daunting by the fact that I was to jet off to the newly opened Bulgari Resort in Bali and mingle with the Pucci- and Jimmy Choo-strutting crowd. Talk about pressure!

The last time I had to slim down in a jiffy, I ran to one of the "notable" slimming doctors in town and paid a hefty sum for diet pills. Little did I know that the pills were Bangkok pills, which made me sick and bedridden by the fifth day I was on it. Because of that excruciating experience, I chose to schedule an afternoon at Zunic.

Solution

Launched in September, Zunic is a state-of-the-art slimming and body-sculpting center at the ground floor of the Olympia Building on Makati Avenue. It is managed by a group of Filipino entrepreneurs in partnership with Australian and Canadian investors.

Roxanne Sarthou, the managing director, said, "Zunic is a cut above competition because it has the most modern machines in the country today. All our treatments using these top-of-the-line equipment are proven to be the best in countries such as Spain, Italy, Australia and Canada."

Walking into the elegantly laid-out reception area, I was greeted by Roxanne who brought me into one of the private consulting rooms. Each room, classically done in a tasteful European aesthetic, comes with floor-to-ceiling mirrors (so that you can carefully scrutinize your bodily flaws) and two weighing scales. One hi-tech scale tells you how much fat you have; the other tells you your fluid retention aside from your weight.

Each person receives an individualized program with a particular combination of treatments and sessions per treatment.

Before commencing, there is also a thorough interview conducted by an in-house doctor for safety.

Star treatments

The key word here is non-invasive. No surgery, no needles, no medications. Discomfort is very minimal. There's no down time. Just results.

The first of the treatments, Metabolique, makes use of infrared heat which penetrates below the surface of the skin; it's supposed to speed up metabolism and aid in detoxification. This enables the body to disintegrate stubborn fat cells which tend to cling tenaciously the older one gets.

The treatment's photon therapy supposedly helps repair and prevents signs of aging, diminish wrinkles and skin imperfections, and bring back the radiance and suppleness of youth.

To remove fat immune to diet and exercise, the Contourage treatment uses radio frequency to dispel subcutaneous fat in problem areas such as the tummy, thighs, upper arms and chin.

Aside from blasting the stubborn fat, the machine simultaneously eliminates cellulite, tightens skin and improves circulation. Talk about multitasking.

CelluFree addresses the dimpling brought about by cellulite. Also known as Endermologie, the device uses rollers to suction and lift specific areas, resulting in the breakdown of the fat deposits which contribute to the orange-peel appearance of cellulite.

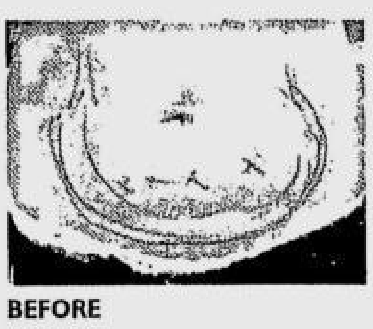
THE AUTHOR

Lastly, for particularly stubborn cellulite, CelluAvant is used. Its three-fold action consists of deep-laser stimulation, cooling, and rhythmic massage that stimulates the production of collagen. At the same time, the fatty deposits are removed, producing smooth, ripple-free skin.

Due to the deep stimulation by laser technology, blood circulation inside the veins also tends to increase lymphatic capacity, enabling the skin to appear tighter and more vibrant.

Results-oriented

It is easy for one to buy into all the weight loss and beautifying mumbo-jumbo.



BEFORE

AFTER

I had been jaded by all the fantastic claims, but curiosity got the better of me and I decided the new technique was worth a shot.

The treatment session started with a nurse taking detailed measurements of my problem areas: my love handles and my thighs. The measurements were to be retaken after my treatments later in the afternoon.

I started with Metabolique, which had me lying down for 30 minutes while a circular beam of warming light rotated from my legs to my torso.

With relaxing music playing through the piped-in system, I was asleep in no time. What a perfect way to burn calories—it sure beat a sweaty workout on my treadmill.

Next, I was led by Julie, my nurse, for my session of Contourage.

Once again I lied down, and Julie carefully took note of the areas she needed to target.

Taking a handheld device attached to a box-like stand-up machine, she continued to run the device over the areas to be treated, stopping every couple of seconds just to check the temperature on the target area.

Again, I almost drifted off to sleep.

When we were done, my measurements were retaken and to my utter surprise, I had lost an inch off each thigh and on my waist.

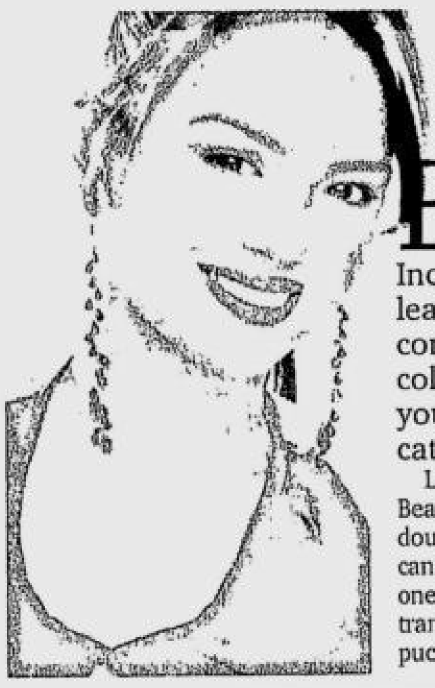
Still incredulous, I continued to take my measurements daily till I left for Bali. True enough, the inches stayed away.

Meanwhile, I avoided binging and maintained my workout routine.

As beauty treatments go, I must say Zunic broke the barrier for me, and I left confidently for Bali, ready to face the Pucci-clad crowd.

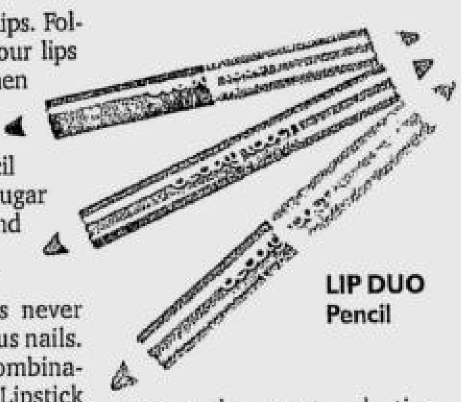
Zunic's non-invasive surgery lets you lose weight as quickly as you have acquired them during the madness of holiday binging

Fab lips and nails



BEAUTY TOUCH, BY Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, Inc., one of the country's leading direct-selling companies, presents new colors guaranteed to give your puckers that eye-catching sparkle.

Let your lips speak volumes with Beauty Touch Lip Duo Pencil, a double-ended jumbo pencil you can use as a lip liner and lip color in one for a velvety soft lip finish. To transform your lips into luscious puckers, use the darker shade first to line the corner of your lips. Follow this up by filling in your lips with the lighter end. Then press your lips together to get the vampy look. Beauty Touch Lip Duo Pencil is available in shades of Sugar & Spice, Red Hot and Naughty & Nice.



LIP DUO Pencil

A fashion-forward look for the new year is never complete without gorgeous nails. Get the perfect lip-nail combination with Beauty Touch Lipstick and Nail Polish Set, which has three great shades to give your lips and nails that alluring charm this new year.

Go foxy with Caramel Karma for lips matched with Black nail polish. On elegant nights, use Hot Scarlet for plump, fiery lips and Red Velvet for sophisticated-looking nails. Aiming for a simple yet glamorous look? Color your puckers with Pecan Fudge matched with White Satin for your nails.

Complete your makeover with exciting shades from Beauty Touch's makeup line. Highlight the beauty of your eyes with Beauty Touch Bolds for a smoky effect; Beauty Touch Brights to bring out your eyes' enchanting allure; Beauty Touch Lights to give that heavenly glow; and Beauty Touch Pastel to create a fun, girly look.

For instant glow, choose from among the great selection of pressed powders from Beauty Touch, all specially formulated to match your skintone.

For a natural, fair radiance, use Natural Light or Light shades. To achieve a tan finish, try Natural Tan; or go for a pinkish glow with Light Beige. To get that soft, shimmering polish, try Soft Sand.

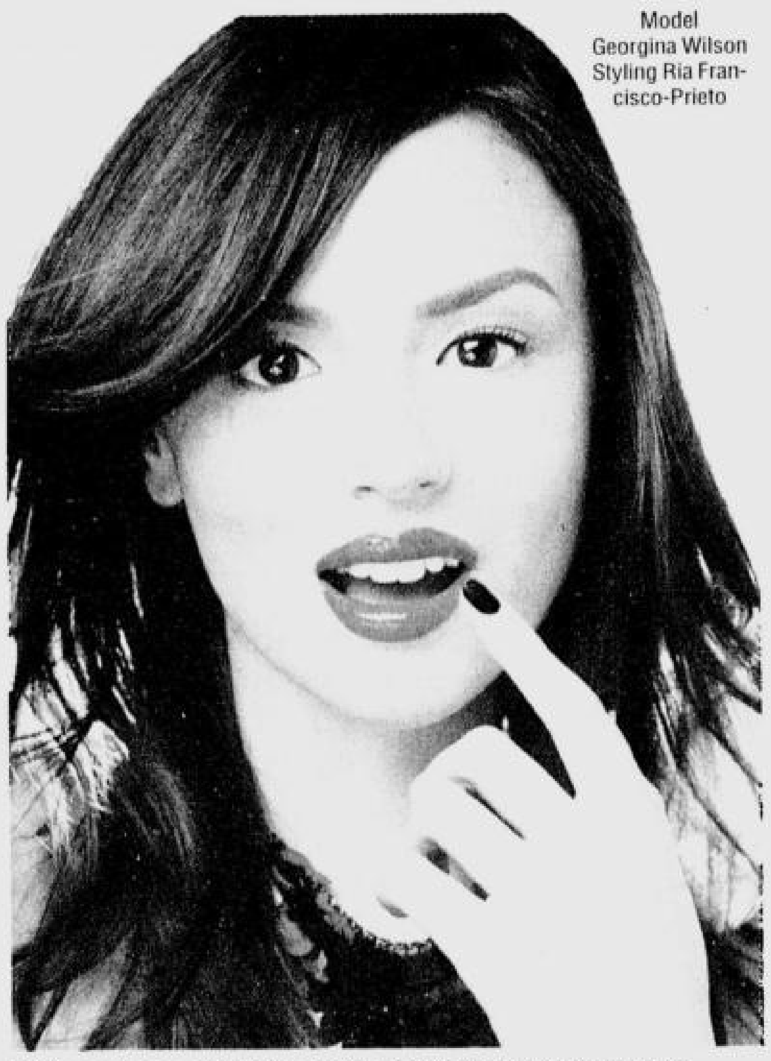
Add more glam to your face by giving it an extra glow with blushers from Beauty Touch: Natural Blush, Foxy Red or Almondine.

Then, for that finishing touch, layer your puckers with Lip Glaze shiny liquid lip gloss.

beauty touch

BEAUTY Touch Sets

Model Georgina Wilson
Styling Ria Francisco-Prieto



LET your lips speak volumes with Beauty Touch Lip Duo Pencil.

TAN SEDUCTRESS by Meldy Miram; using Mahogany Copper Brown (Majirel 4.45) and light sections of Mahogany Copper Dark Blonde (Majirel 6.45)

L'Oréal Professionnel, together with four accomplished local hairdressers, interpret different hair concepts for the modern Filipina

Hairstyling Angelo Falconi III, Francis Lee, Jasmine Lisbona, Meldy Miram
Makeup Xeng Zulueta for Shu Uemura
Styling Leica Carpo
Photography Mike Cheung
Clothes Max Studio and Mix
Accessories Arnel Papa

Hair, skin, style

IF FALL/WINTER TRENDS brought out the primitive and animal side of fashion, summer will be more sensorial and nude. Nothing will clash and everything will meld into soft, wavy lines—sometimes imperceptible and always subtle.

Case in point: the artistic performances of Vanessa Beecroft for Louis Vuitton, which showcased nude women with clear sensuality. Or the liquid perfume drops by Philippe di Meo, which is applied like a patch to the body so each fragrance develops differently depending on the person's skin, thereby portraying the skin as sensual, intimate and an extension of oneself.

AMBER Goddess by Angelo Falconi III; using Light Brown (Majirel 5.25) and Mahogany Gold Dark Blonde (Majirel 6.35)

Then there's the media skin by Tokujin Yoshioka. It reproduces the feel of the skin in a mobile phone and is known as sensorial high technology where human warmth is infused to make high-tech gadgets more intimate instead of cold and merely metallic.

And of course, there are organic designs that continue to inspire hairdressers to create hairstyles which follow the contours of the face. Curved lines inspire hairstyles that are both fluid and lightweight, following supple, fine lines.

Meanwhile, clarity is the key word for summer colors. Skin shades and light colors reinvent the concept of luxury. Whiteness emerges as the new modern hue—from chalk to copper, by way of pearly tones, seashell, ballerina-pink and gold.

Hair is colored in a palette of skin shades, from white-washed beige to the tone of tanned skin—perfectly tone on tone with the complexion.

Everything aims for an enhanced look that is deceptively natural, with hair shades that are inspired by skin colors such as alabaster, gold, coral and amber.

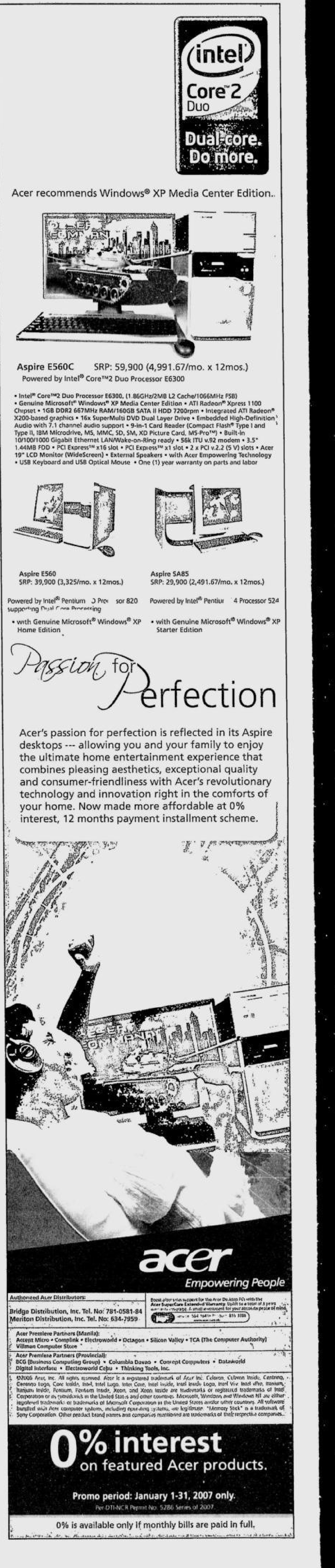
The creator of this hair collection for L'Oréal Professionnel is renowned stylist Gregory Kaoua, whose works with Vogue Italy, Marie Claire, Elle and Vanity Fair have endeared him to famed photographers Patrick Demarchelier, Ellen Von Unwerth and André Rau. Kaoua is known for his polished styles, with savvy smooth and tousled mixes that are sensual at all times.

ALABASTER Muse by Jasmine Lisbona. A dark brown base with a touch of ash blonde (Majirel 7.1)

To provide a visual treat plus some beauty quick tips for readers, L'Oréal Professionnel, together with four accomplished local hairdressers, interprets these different hair concepts to suit the Filipina.

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

CORAL Mermaid by Francis Lee; using dark blonde base (Majirel 6.23) and highlighted with a Golden Blonde (Majilift 12.3)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Bye bye, Chubby

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

WARNING: IF YOU ARE AS broke as the author post-holidays, do not read article as it will only cause undue stress and frustration.

As promised, here is another fat/body-related article for the new year. Part of the unsolved dilemmas that have plagued men and women are fat faces and double chins. We all know someone like that. Her dress size is a size zero to two, but her face makes you think she is at least a size six to 10. Or his size is small to medium but salespeople hand him extra-large shirts.

There are no equivalent slimming creams for the face or exercise gadgets for toning double chin and cheeks.

Since the holidays ended, a lot of you have e-mailed me excitedly about a new kind of fat removal procedure recently approved in the United States called Smart Lipo, which did not include suctioning. Many have asked if this could help with the face and double chin.

Although approved in the US last November, Smart Lipo has been in the Philippines since late 2005. It had been brought here by the Belo Medical Group with Ara Mina as its billboard model.

By the perky tone of your letters of inquiry, I detect that the guys who wrote me are: 1. scared of surgery; 2. thinking that Smart Lipo is a lunch-break procedure with no downtime; and 3. assuming there is no invasive action involved whatsoever.

After this article there will be those of you who will still consider the procedure because it does have its major advantages over the classic liposuction I underwent in 2003.

But there will also be those who will be disappointed because it's not as easy as they thought.

The areas to be treated are marked before injected with a solution of saline and local anesthesia.

The client can opt to be awake or sedated intravenously if she is squeamish although there will really be no pain during operation due to the anesthesia.

A laser fiber that is less than 1 mm in diameter is inserted into the fat, causing the fat cells to burst and liquefy, making it easier to suction out the fat or simply leave it to be expelled by your own lymphatic system via the usual way.

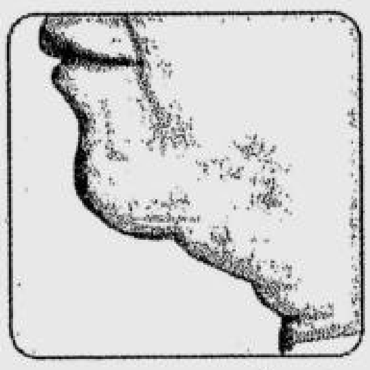
Personally, I prefer it to be suctioned off because it is not only faster; it also removes the maximum amount of fat. Opting to leave it for the body to expel naturally would take four months; and only 60-70 percent of the fat can be removed.

Liquefying fat

The process can actually remove/liquefy pockets of fat as large as a man's fist. There will only be little blood; sometimes there will be no blood at all.

There will also be little loose skin because the laser not only seals blood vessels but also makes skin contract, making the procedure perfect for older patients well up into their 80s to have the procedure.

Smart Lipo's edge over classic liposuction is that while one will still have to wear the compression garment to support the area, there is a lot less discomfort, bruising and downtime, and results are seen as early as the week after procedure with constant improvement over the next months.



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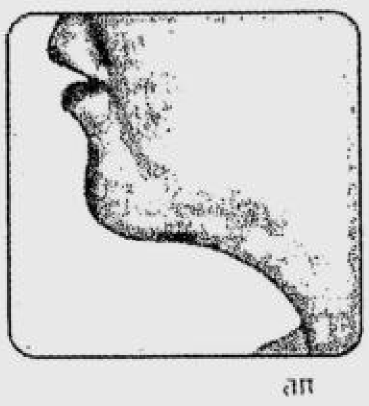

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In classic lipo there was major bruising and I was very swollen up to a month. It is ideal for the whole body but more so for the fragile exposed areas of the cheeks, chin, man boobs and thick ankles, where scarring is a major concern.

Cost: A whopping P30,000 per area versus the classic liposuction (P25,000 per area). In 2003, mine was only P5,000 per area and VAT was not yet applied.

Catch: Not meant to remove cellulite which is trapped fat under the skin's surface and not the solution for obese people.

The ideal candidate is one who is healthy, near the ideal weight, with stubborn areas of fat such as saddle bags, love handles, hips, arms, double chin and lower abdomen.

Those who are severely overweight will have to keep coming back for several sessions because there is a maximum of four liters of fat or four areas at a time that can be removed, whichever comes first.

Results: The area will seem more compact immediately. But at times it will look fuller or the same size as before the treatment.

Body contours will improve gradually day by day and expected results will be visible after 60-120 days.

If a second procedure is required because there are more than four liters of fat that need to be removed, it can be done no less than four months after original procedure.

How soon one can resume daily activities: Those who have jobs that are sedentary a.k.a. chained to a desk and with minimal activity can go to work the next day wearing the binder as opposed to the four days post-traditional lipo. More active lifestyles should rest for a week to make sure.

Did I have it done? No. I intend to marry and have all my children first before going through another liposuction. If still unmarried and childless at 48, I will give it a go! Assuming I have the necessary funds, that is. Judging by inflation it might be P100,000 per area by then, VAT exclusive.

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SCENT-SATIONS

Invitation to love

LOVE IN PARIS BY NINA RICCI IS A SCENT DEDICATED TO A woman abandoning herself to the pursuit of her dreams. She travels through the most romantic place where all becomes possible—Paris, a city whose splendor inspires love.

The fragrance is a bouquet of delicate roses captured in its morning freshness. From the very first top note, the sparkling freshness of bergamot from calabria, together with star anise, bursts forth. The heart opens with white peony and a touch of velvety apricot enlightened by jasmine. Its trail, magnified by vanilla with musky and wood notes, evokes sensuality and exquisite femininity.

Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp. in leading department stores nationwide.

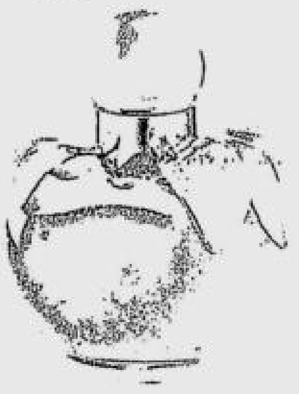
Valentine sensuality

212SEXY BY CAROLINA HERrera is the quintessential Valentine muse—enigmatic, seductive, feminine.

Getting its name from Manhattan 212 phone code, Carolina Herrera's 212sexy draws its inspiration from the allure of New York City's most cosmopolitan district. The scent is a burst of sensual energy this Valentine season: citrus-spicy top notes of tangerine, bergamot and rose pepper; floral-tasty medium notes of floral petals, gardenia and cotton candy; and fresh oriental-wood musk base notes of sandalwood, 212 musk and vanilla.

212sexy is available in leading department stores nationwide. Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.

Alluring apple



PERSONIFYING THE APPLE IS Nina, a fragrance by Nina Ricci. The scent is enchantingly sweet and addicting with top notes of Calibrian Lemon and Caipirinah Lime; heart notes Toffee Apple, Peony and Moonflower; and base notes of Apple Wood and White Cedar.

The fragrance is presented in an apple-shaped flacon adorned with dainty silver leaves. It is sweet, fruity, vibrant, crisp, and rich—as tempting as the fruit it represents. Its juice is a luscious red, the color of passion.

Nina is a unique fragrance because of its toffee apple notes. Imagine the surprisingly pleasant aromas and tastes of sweet apples dipped in toffee-flavored syrup. The scent is delicious, like an irresistibly sinful dessert tempting lovers of all persuasions.

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Five women, one beauty regimen

QUIAMBAO

FOR FIVE DISTINGUISHED FILipinas—beauty queen and TV personality Miriam Quiambao, fashion and beauty guru Daphne Oseña-Paez, theater stalwart Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo, fashion store owner Ines Delgado and skin expert Dr. Pie Calayan—the search for the fountain of youth is over, thanks to Olay Total Effects.

Quiambao, a Miss Universe first runner-up and an accomplished TV personality, knows the toll that her job takes on her skin.

Olay Total Effects, with its promise of helping to fight the seven signs of aging, has replaced all the various products she uses on her skin. "My skin is firmer, my pores are smaller and I think my lines are diminishing. Well, I'm hooked."

Lauchengco-Yulo shares that looking young is also a concern for her, since the roles she tackles onstage are much younger than her age.

Barely a month after using Olay Total Effects, she's convinced she's found her deliverance. "I walked into a workshop I was conducting and they all turned to me and asked if I was wearing makeup. I guess that's the proof."

Oseña-Paez, a fashion and beauty icon and a mainstay of many fashion magazines' best-dressed list, knows the importance of taking care of her skin, which is why she is very careful about the products she uses on her face.

"When they sent me new Olay Total Effects, I was first very hesitant to use it. Then I realized that if it's the No. 1 facial moisturizer in Hong Kong, London and New York, it must work. For me, Olay Total Effects seems to work even better because other people noticed the improvement in my skin, so that's just great."

Delgado, owner of fashion shop Itsie Bitsie and program director of Asia Society, is always on the go. Thus, she wants to spend as little time as possible taking care of it without compromising the youthfulness of her skin.

Olay Total Effects ensures that Delgado's beauty regimen is quick and effective, an immense help considering that this accomplished entrepreneur just hosted the prestigious, much-awaited Philippine debut of Monique Lhuillier.

Calayan, who only trusts her own products for her skin, recommends Olay Total Effects after having tried it and receiving raves not only professionally but in her personal life as well.

With her own skin looking better than ever, Calayan is expanding her role of transforming ugly ducklings into beautiful swans as a beauty guru in the Philippine version of "Extreme Makeover."

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LIFE-STYLED

Thelma San Juan

Models' excessive thinness a global issue

Italy now requires a health license before a model can walk down the runway

FASHION MODELS, DESIGNers, photographers, editors worldwide—indeed the global fashion industry—are confronting an issue which is symptomatic of the era: the eating disorders of models and their excessive thinness. In another era, you never would have thought that a model's reed-thin body would be an issue to rock the industry, from Madrid to New York, but now it is.

After three European models, barely in their 20s, died after having suffered from eating disorders, a Madrid official fired the first salvo against the world's uncontrollable obsession with thinness. This was picked up by Milan. According to Women's Wear Daily, Italy's Chamber of Fashion declared that models, to do the fashion weeks, must have a health license issued by the Chamber, the Association of Fashion Services and a committee of doctors, nutritionists, psychologists. The Milan "ethical code of self-regulation" states that the model must be at least 16 years old, and meet the body mass index of 18.5 set by World Health Organization.

This week WWD reports that the American industry, through the powerful Council of Fashion Designers of America, has weighed in. While it is not issuing health licenses, the CFDA released guidelines to govern the modeling industry.

The CFDA committee is headed by its president, the design icon Diane von Furstenberg, and Vogue editor in chief Anna Wintour. The guidelines, writes WWD, state that the industry must be able to identify "the early warning signs in an individual at risk of developing an eating disorder"; also, "support the well-being of younger individuals by not hiring models under the age of 16 for runway shows; not allowing models under the age of 18 to work past midnight at fittings and shoots, and providing regular breaks and rest."

Interestingly, they also reiterate the supply of "healthy meals, snacks and water backstage and at shoots and provide nutrition and fitness education."

Even smoking and alcohol have not been spared, as the guidelines called for "ensuring a smoke-free environment, and address underage drinking."

Not since the widespread of AIDS in the '80s, which almost decimated the fashion industry ("people were dropping like flies," went one of the remarks we remember), has a health issue beleaguered the glossy, glitzy world that is fashion.

Come to think of it, one just has to be sensible so as not to die anorexic. But being sensible is one tough task.

New Year wishes

Catching up with some colleagues and friends, we asked at what stage in life they're in as another year begins (yes, like it's our business), and their wish for themselves in '07:

Nes Jardin, CCP president: "I'm at that stage in life when I've realized that what is most important for me now is to be able to fulfill my main role in this world—be an agent for cultural change and development in our country. And that I'm avidly pursuing this role, so that I can somehow say to myself, after I retire, that I've somehow made a dent. This year, my wish is more successes for the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the arts sector."

Claude Tayag, artist, writer, gourmet: "As I turned 50 last year, I came to realize that one's needs are so few and basic. The rest are just 'wants' and don't really matter at the end of the day. I feel I am at a stage of being happy and content—having found the best partner one can have and with my career. But this is not to mistake it for remaining complacent and stagnant. Perhaps I am no longer as driven as before, but there is still that wanderlust in areas I haven't explored or done before. For the new year, I wish for myself good health to be able to continue my art-making, needing to work only enough to maintain my lifestyle, at the same time giving back to society in terms of pursuing the endeavors I care most about—advocating Filipino art, culture and cuisine to the world."

Mutya Crisostomo, brand manager, Pond's: "I'm at a stage of yet another discovery. A passion I have put aside has resurfaced and I'm acting on it. I'll be starting fashion design classes at Slim's. I used to design prom dresses in high school for my classmates and actually even got paid for it. Hopefully this is preparatory for FIT in New York. I wish for a meaningful year ahead when people rediscover lost/unfulfilled passions."

Frannie Jacinto, wife, mother and well-loved society figure: "Hopefully I'm still far from the 'departure stage.' I'm grateful for all the blessings and grace my family and I have received. There isn't much to wish for materially because it's time to simplify life and have peace of mind. I don't want anything materially, but my wish is to be more helpful to others in '07."

Pinky Amador, actress and diver: "I'm at my most productive and creative stage. I'm now in a position where my versatility is recognized but I still want to keep challenging myself. The start of '07 is such an exciting time as a lot of plans are being made for my recording, a possible Hollywood stint, a US concert tour and a musical. It can't get any better!"

Tintin Babao, TV show host: "I'm in a happy place now. I embrace God's everyday blessings, big and small. As I grow older and wiser each year, my life's mission becomes clearer. I also look forward to having a second baby hopefully this year."

Rachy Cuna, floral art, bag and lifestyle designer: "'06 was a good year, there was so much work. This year I resolve to keep in mind that it's no longer just about me. I will do my best to make time for invitations for exhibitions and other inspirational projects, especially abroad. I'd like to do my share to make more of the world discover how great, creative and talented the Filipino is."

More New Year's wish lists next week.

imagine how these twelve winners had a bright Christmas

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FRIENDS of the Museum: Sarrat Mayor Corazon Abad, Araceli Albano-Drake, Rosebella Corpuz, Irene Marcos Araneta, Araceli Pastor and Judy Francisco

GAMENG Foundation Inc.'s Regalado Trota José, Sally Rose Aoigan, Araceli Albano-Drake, Eric Zerrudo, Al Valenciano; (standing) Mico Manalo, Fr. Danilo Laeda, Irene Marcos Araneta, Vicente Ordinario and Ting Almasan of Flying V Gas

IRENE Marcos Araneta warmly congratulates Heyasmin Aida Fernandez. Standing: Gov. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Imelda Fernandez, Greynor Fernandez and Anastacia Acang

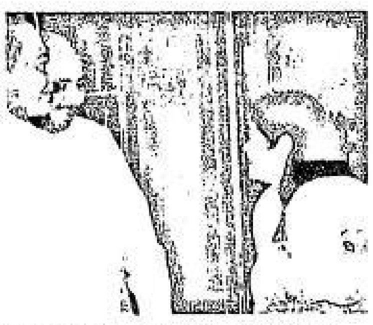
Night to remember in Ilocos

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

GOV. FERDINAND R. Marcos Jr. delivers the opening remarks.



LIZA A. Marcos greets Golden Ocampo and Ali Ahmed.

GOV. FERDINAND R. Marcos Jr. with Irene and Greggy Araneta

EMCEES Eric Zerrudo and Maryjane Pascual

ERNESTO Ocampo Olarte, Gameng Lifetime Achievement awardee

BOARD member Michael Keon

ROWENA Chua and Vice Mayor Albert Chua of Batac, Ilocos Norte

WOW, TIME REALLY DOES NOT stand still, *palanggas*; it flies, faster than you can bat an eyelash. Can you believe it's already the sixth anniversary of the Museo Ilocos Norte? As in the past five years, the governor's grand dinner-dance benefit ball took place at the sprawling Fort Ilocandia Resort Hotel.

This *tres* formal affair had the women wearing their brightly colored *inabel* gowns as they were welcomed by the Friends of the Museum. Once in the ballroom, their attention was riveted by the tables whose centerpieces were made from San Nicolas clay, with a piece of bamboo standing in its center, topped with a miniature black pot candleholder, adorned with coconut palm leaves shaped like birds flapping their wings.

Gov. **Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.**, *naturellement*, gave his welcome remarks in his usual impeccable diction, expressing his gratitude to the benefactors of the museum. Since this is Bongbong's last term as governor, he's looking forward to next year when he will attend the benefit ball—but as a guest.

Highlight of the fun affair was the awarding of the Gameng Lifetime Achievement Award to two Ilocanos "for their exemplary dedication in preserving and enriching the Ilocanos' cultural heritage."

The awardees were **Heyasmin Aida Acang Fernandez**, "for her outstanding contributions in the preservation of loom weaving which defines the identity of the Ilocano"; and **Ernesto Ocampo Olarte**, for his "exceptional contribution in the field of music, translating the daily lives and aspirations of the Ilocanos into folk songs."

Fort Ilocandia's superb cuisine had meat, mixed seafood in thick soup, king prawns, deep tenderloin with sauteed broccoli and buttered rice, and, for dessert, fresh fruits, *palanggas*.

Opening the dance was the governor, with his brilliant *simpatico* wife, lawyer **Louise Araneta Marcos**, dancing to Olarte's song and guitar accompaniment. **Dean Arriola** and his band later got out of their seats and rocked the night away, dahlings.

Araceli Albano-Drake, administrator of the Museo Ilocos Norte Fort Ilocandia, thanked the benefactors such as Venvi Development Corp.; Currimao Green Nipa Resort Corp.; Pagcor; LifestyleAsia; Plaza Maestro; Tropical Villas Subdivision; **Jonathan O. Gan**; Gov. and Mrs. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., *natch*; **Mariano V. Marcos II**; **Irene Marcos Araneta**; Friends of the Museum and Madame **Imelda Romualdez Marcos.**

A fab affair, *palanggas*, all for a good cause.

Comfy pants

Timing it for the ending of the holiday season, renowned fashion brand Dockers San Francisco launched its stylish yet casual and comfy collection.

Mezze at Greenbelt 2 was filled with good-looking models in khakis and performance-based pants.

That fashionable Friday night, Dockers San Francisco showed its "In San Francisco, Living is an Art" campaign.

"Through research, consumers tell us that art and romance are two elements that they strongly connect to San Francisco. This campaign, with its contemporary, fun and artistic depiction of romance in San Francisco, definitely captures the lifestyle and spirit of the brand," said **Bobet Romualdo**, Dockers San Francisco brand leader.

The happening got on a roll with Dockers retail and product manager **Joan Reyes** introducing the line, *palanggas*.

Seen enjoying the new Dockers San Francisco were RPA People & Parties' **Philip Abadicio** and Fashion TV's **Kat Holigores.**

Levi Strauss Philippines Inc. country manager **Ramon Martelino** and Romualdo welcomed the crowd that included **Glen Gayle, Becky Garcia** and **Jean Saburit.**

Other guests caught checking the new Fall-Holiday collection were "It's A Guy Thing" TV host **Ketchup Eusebio** and Mega's VP for advertising, **Nikki Banzon.**

Models wore their personalities. Day sequence showed bright, robust colors, highlighted by romantic textures, from the polished Harvard look to the rough camouflage, great for all of us night-cravers, *palanggas*.

The stark contrast was clear, yet the distinct brand's classic look would shine for each individual. It was simply Dockers San Francisco at its cool best, *palanggas*.

Prince is back

Good news to local food and wine connoisseurs: the Prince Albert Rotisserie has reopened at the Manila Intercon.

The critically acclaimed fine dining restaurant had been closed for refurbishment for two months, dahlings.

To herald the Prince's new look, a strictly-by-invitation-only dinner was hosted by the hotel for its loyal patrons and Manille's high-power set.

The simply irresistible treat was the awesome nine-course dinner, prepared by hotel general manager **Christian Pirodon**, executive chef **Patrick Fournes**, and **Cyrille Soenen.**

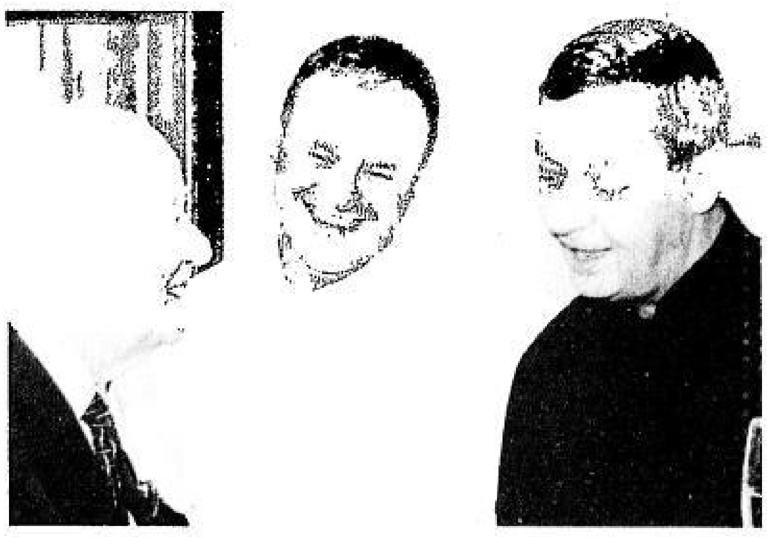
Now, totally bathed in cool blue and silver color tones for a more contemporary and chic ambiance, the restaurant looks like a true prince. The look, with subtle, but elegant floral arrangement by **Rachy Cuna**, impressed the evening's gourmands.

Everyone's favorite *palangga*, restaurant director **Francis Felipe**, and his staff brought guests to their table. Welcoming the invitees were food and beverage director, *el simpatico* **Marc Cerqueda**; sales and marketing director **Carmela Bocanegra**; and public relations director **Jenny Pena.**

Definitely enjoying the excellently prepared dinner menu and specially chosen wines were Rustan's Group president **Bienvenido Tantoco Jr.**; French Ambassador and Madame **Gerard Chesnel**; French Business Club president **Philippe Gauthier**; Intercontinental Hotels Group regional manager **Paul Rene Lee**; Singapore Airlines' **Rita Dy**; and a very, very select list of 80 VIPs, dahlings.

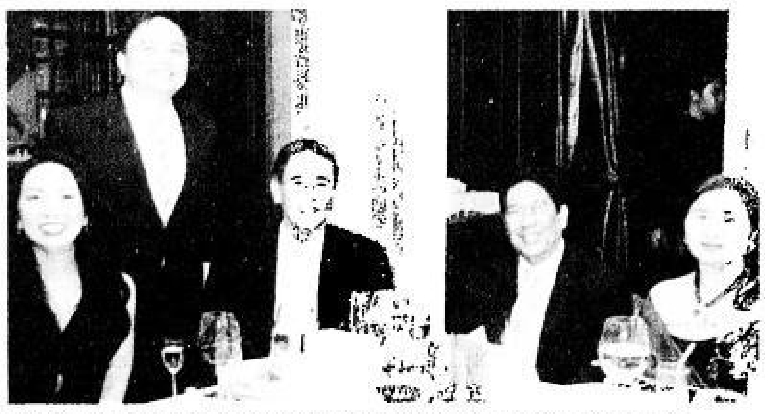
Applause and the clinking of champagne flutes greeted the three French chefs when they made their appearance from the kitchen, *après* the one-of-a-kind dinner. The chefs happily reported that "contrary to expectations, there were no fireworks in the kitchen."

For take home, the hotshot guests were gifted with bottled baked pears in red wine, a specialty of the house.



DON José Olbes congratulates guest chef Cyrille Soenen and Intercon GM Christian Pirodon for Prince Albert's facelift.

BUSINESS magnate Louie Ablaza and wife, honorary Guatemala consul Mellie Romero A., with businessman Frank Evaristo



ANNA Sobrepeña and husband, Metrobank president Aniceto Sobrepeña; BPI president Gigi Montinola III and Ambassador Joey and Nilda Antonio

SHARON Tan, Tourism Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque, Alice Estregan and Intercontinental Manila's Carmela Bocanegra

SUNNY Pirodon and Alfred Roco of Fuego Hotels

CAPRICHOSA Day Spa's Ramir and Carmen Sumayao

DOCKERS San Francisco's Bobet Romualdo with Kit Tajonera and Grace Ibsernas

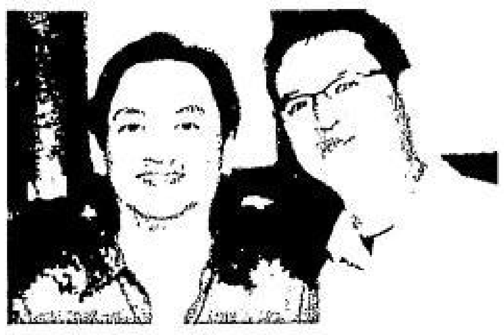
FASHION TV's Kat Holigores

DOCKERS' Joan Reyes

RPA People & Parties' Carlo Sumayao

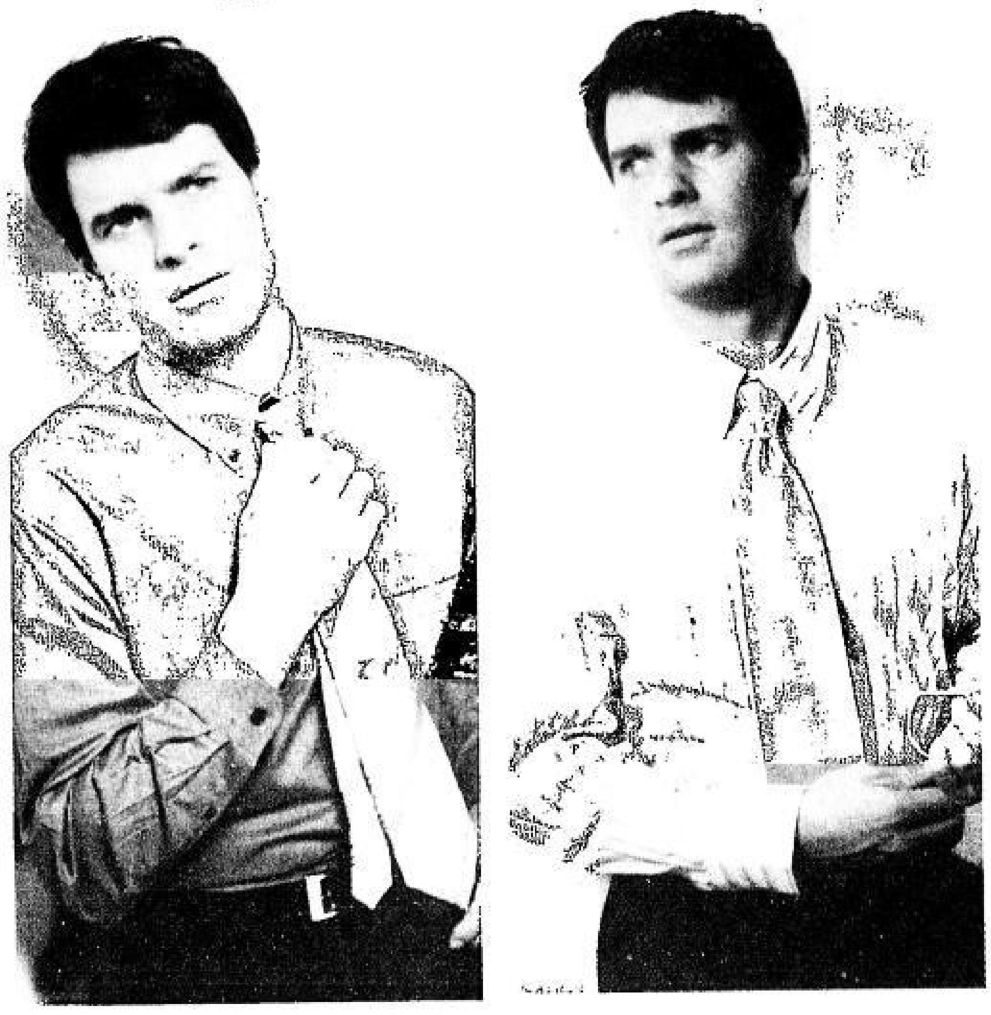
ERICH Pe Lim, host Tim Yap and Ralph Go

TV HOST Ketchup Eusebio and gorgeous Julia Duncan



RPA People & Parties' Philip Abadicio and Levi Strauss' Ramon Martelino

Corporate cool



THERE'S NOTHING DRAB OR conservative about the new tie collection at SM. Colors are rich—plum, red, maroon, rust and tangerine—and festive like turquoise, teal and lime.

Patterns are playful—dancing polka dots, savvy stripes, cutting-edge geometrics, and a new twist on classic paisley prints.

Reflecting a young, dynamic corporate mood, the necktie collection is available at the Men's Accessories Department of all SM stores.

GOINGS-ON

NEW LBP PRESIDENT
President Macapagal-Arroyo swears into office Gilda Elepaño Pico (third from right) as president and chief executive officer of the Land Bank of the Philippines. Ceremonies were held at the Kalayaan Hall of the Malacañang Palace. Pico, who rose from the ranks, is the first woman LBP president. She succeeds Finance Secretary Gary B. Teves, who is Land Bank chair. Also at the ceremonies were Teves (third from left) and Pico's family (from left): son Archie and his wife Tanya, husband Art and daughter Cecille.

Forum on work-life balance Jan. 24

A rerun of the Work-Life Balance Forum will be held Jan. 24 at the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P).

During the forum, results of the first annual global study on family-responsible employers will be presented. The survey was spearheaded by the IESE Business School, one of the world's top business schools. In the Philippines, the survey was conducted by the UA&P. People who want to find out if their companies have an authentic work-life balance program may access and complete the brief online questionnaire at http://www.iesedti.com/ifrei_filipinas/ifrei.htm. Call 8935274 or e-mail worklife.ph@gmail.com.

DINNER-DANCE. The Sweethearts of Christ Foundation Inc. will hold a pre-Valentine dinner-dance at 7 p.m., Jan. 27, at Chaves Gardens, 313 Cadena de Amor, Ayala Alabang. The event launches the organization's series of fund-raising activities, Dugtong Kamay, Dugtong Buhay. Beneficiaries are Bicol typhoon victims and GK Samar. The dinner-dance will feature Dulce, comedian Mike Unson, ballroom dancing to the music of Screen Gems Band, and raffle. Call 8093116 or 6360255/58.

CLEARANCE SALE. Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall clears the racks and brings prices down—up to 70 percent off—Jan. 19-21. Head to the department store, supermarkets, Home Gallery, Planet Toys and over 250 specialty stores and boutiques mallwide and avail of big discounts. Exchange your P500 single-purchase receipt for a coupon in the ongoing Grand 16th Anniversary Blowout of Prizes raffle promo for a chance to win a new car, home appliances and gift certificates in the first grand draw on March 30. Only receipts dated Oct. 2, 2006, to March 25, 2007, are qualified for the draw. Call 6815401 local 118.

COLORING CONVENTION. Learn how to add color the right way at the Hair Color Convention Feb. 5 at Edsa Plaza. The convention aims to give stylists helpful tips on the latest color trends and how to pick the right color for a person. Local hair and style experts, beauty gurus and internationally trained consultants will discuss the latest techniques and discuss topics like Psychology of Color and The Right Hue for You. Call 8431319, 8432310, or 0920-9703221.

HOMECOMING. Members of the De La Salle University Batch '82 Homecoming Core group attended the launch of the lingerie line of Mango, recently held at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Mango is one of the major sponsors of the DLSU homecoming and pre-homecoming events. The 2007 DLSU homecoming "Greenerations" is set March 3 at the DLSU grounds in Taft Avenue Manila. Several activities have already been undertaken as a prelude to the homecoming, including a poker tournament held last October and a badminton tournament held on November 2006. The annual golf tournament will be held in February. For more details on the homecoming, call DLSU alumni office or Honors Inc.-The Reunion Managers at 4377090 or 9114045.

REUNION
Dr. Rhoda V. Santiago (seated left) and Dr. Norma Gamboa (seated right), Filipino residents in the United States, returned home recently. They were feted by their colleagues and friends at the Crowne Plaza in Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City, at a reunion/meeting, which coincided with the 80th birthday of Dr. Eliseo Trinidad (in a Barong Tagalog). Also in photo are Dr. Tess Trinidad, Dr. Charing Carag and Tony Carag.

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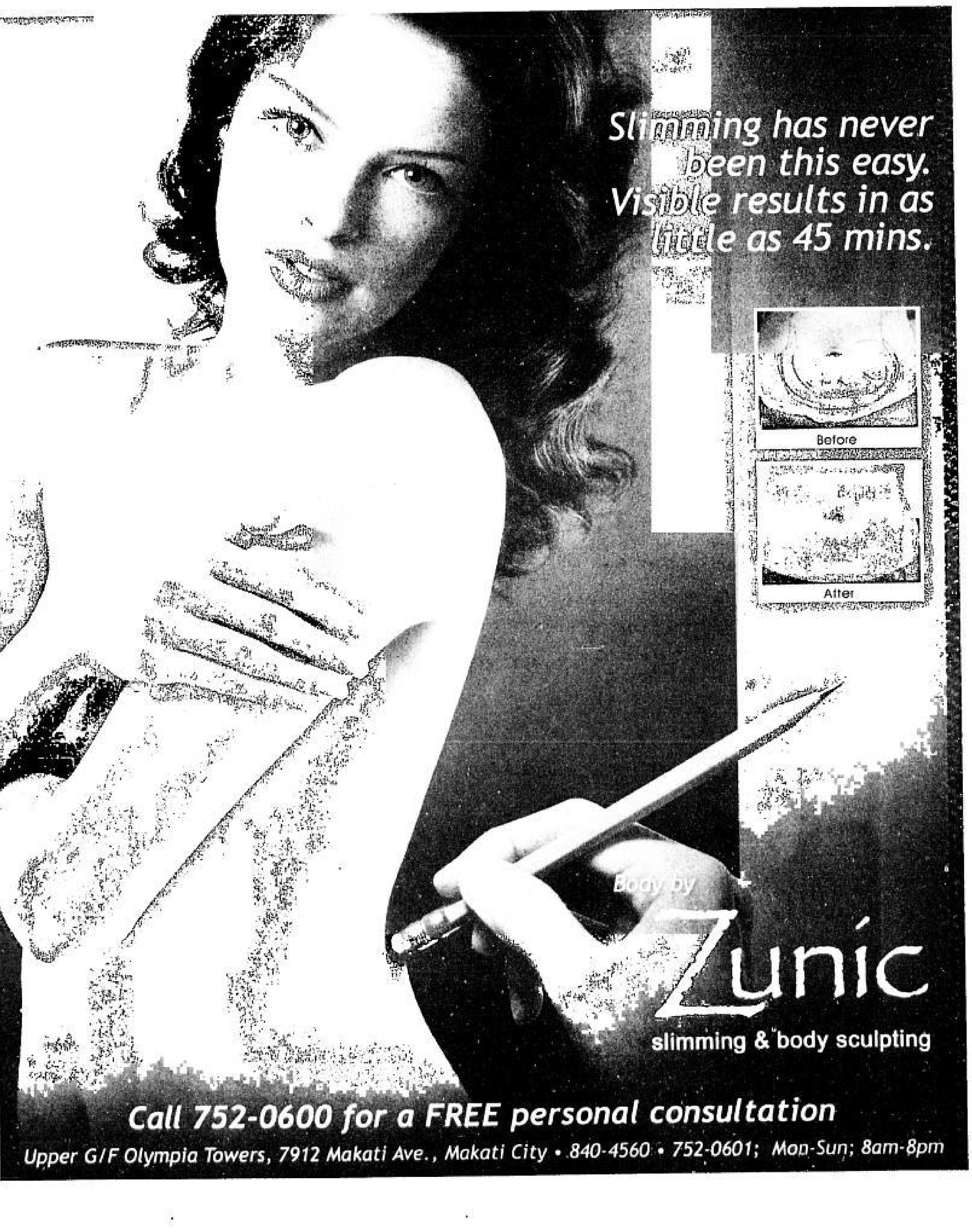

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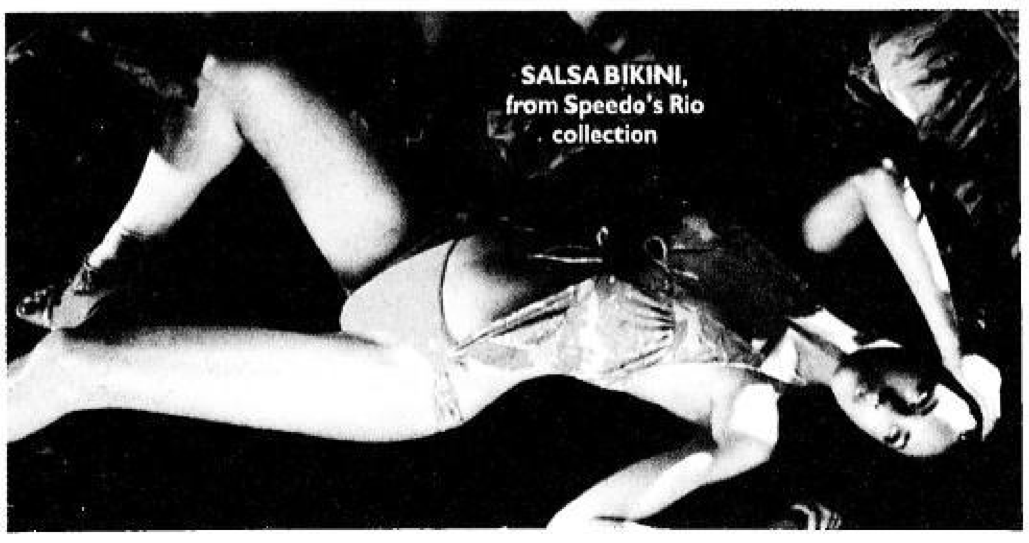
MERIT Robed Hood Sweat in Sea Coral from Speedo's Well-being collection



SALSA BIKINI, from Speedo's Rio collection

HEAD-TURNING Azalea Bikini, from Speedo's Spring/Summer 2007 collection

Chic swimwear

A NEW LINE OF SWIMWEAR AND APPAREL inspired by a woman's need for rest and relaxation banners the Speedo Spring/Summer 2007 collection. Labeled Mind.Body. Speedo, the range includes pieces designed for freedom and self-indulgence at the spa, pool or gym.

Swimwear within the collection of Mind.Body.Speedo features Sculpture, which is exclusive to Speedo. The fabric sculpts, contours and cocoons the body, flattering the natural shape, providing solid support and giving freedom to move in and out of the water. Discreet, seamfree bust and tummy control offer further support.

The swim pieces also feature Endurance+, the latest high-performance fabric innovation from Speedo. Chlorine resistant, water-durable and with quick-drying properties, Endurance+ reinforces the glove-like fit provided by Sculpture. These fabrics also ensure that whatever the environment, each piece withstands damaging elements such as salt water and chlorine.

This is the first time Speedo has created pieces that can be incorporated into daily leisure and lifestyles. A variety of wrap tops, track pants, slouch tops and tanks cater for every taste, age and body shape.

The range is available in a variety of muted colors and tones such as Titanium, Raven and Tomato. Styles are contemporary and comfortable to wear with fine, functional detailing.

The Mind.Body.Speedo collection combines Speedo's superior support, comfort and technical fabrics with beautiful designs and silhouettes.

Also in the Spring/Summer 2007 collection is the eye-catching line Rio, which combines colorful designs with striking silhouettes for a beach collection that makes a bold statement.

Speedo combined high-octane fashion with its swimwear expertise to produce a daring, chic collection influenced by Brazil's carnival spirit. Strong colors and prints, intricate detail and unique cuts reflect the vibrant Latin inspiration behind each piece.

HATHA Batwing Zip Sweat in Raven from Speedo's Well-being collection

ENSITIVE triangle bikini in Raven

Dazzling talents in jewelry

YOUNG AND FRESH TALENT EMERGED IN the awarding ceremony of this year's prestigious 2nd Philippine Jewelry Design Competition, recently held at the Quezon Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel."

The highly successful design competition was organized by the Guild of Philippine Jewelers, Inc. It attracted the participation of an unprecedented 250 entries, most of them from students and amateur designers.

Out of the total entries, 16 top designs were chosen and transformed into actual jewelry pieces for final judging.

The competition was divided into three categories: precious metals, precious metals and gemstones, and precious metals and non-traditional components.

Marianne Frisnedi, 24-year-old graduating student of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Design from the Mapua Institute of Technology, and Rex Geronimo, 20 year-old second-year student of Bachelor of Science in Clothing Technology from University of the Philippines Diliman, bagged the top positions for the three design categories of the competition and edged out the 13 other design finalists submitted by students and professionals alike.

Frisnedi's winning designs included the "Interwoven Necklace," a concept derived from woven abaca with the likeness of *pandan* leaves made from gold and diamonds; and the "C Pendant," a design tribute to the Philippine carabao made of gold and silver, incorporated with *kamagong* for horns.

The two designs won the first place for the precious metals and gemstones, and precious metals and non-traditional materials categories, respectively. Frisnedi's designs were crafted by Sterling Gifts Inc., her sponsor in the competition.

Geronimo's intricately designed half-necklace "Pakpak" garnered the top spot for the all precious metals category for its gold and silver construction. He took home the prize money of P20,000 for the award. His design was exquisitely executed by manufacturing sponsor Goldenas Jewelry.

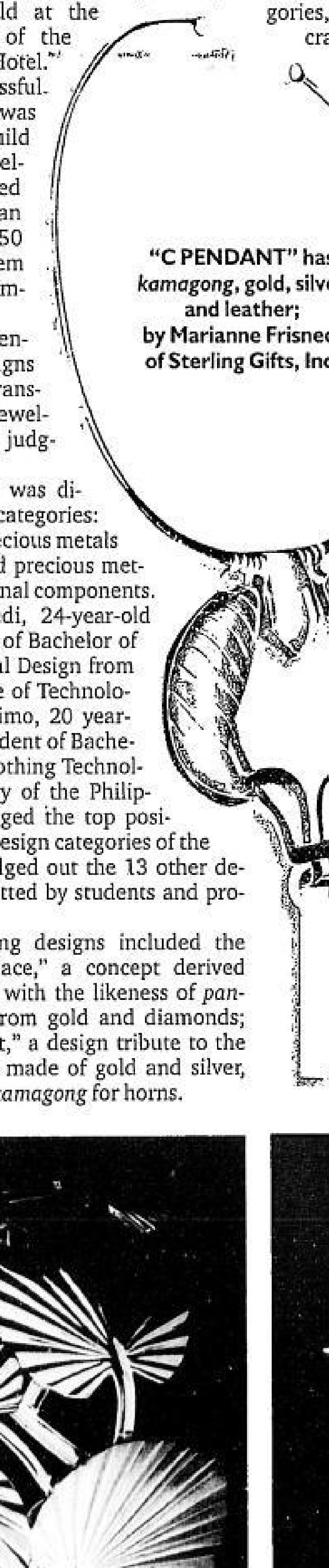
Frisnedi also shone the brightest when the C Pendant was named as the best of the best for this year's design competition, which came with a P30,000 grand prize that added to the P40,000 pesos she had won for her two category wins.

The designs of the two winners and the other finalists were put on grand display at the lobby area of the Makati Shangri-La.

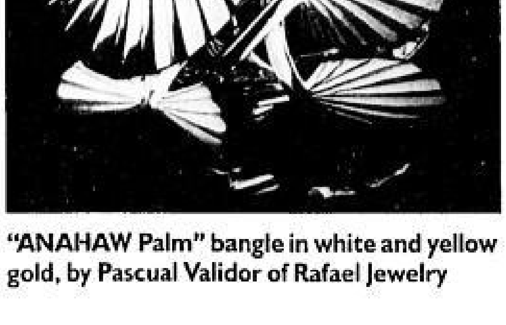
The panel of judges included national artists Ramon Orlina and Salvador Bernal, jewelry designers Fai Co and Hans Brumann, interior designer Tessa Prieto-Valdes and DTI-Citem Softgoods Division OIC Ambet Burgos.

The Yuchengco Museum will exhibit the 16 jewelry pieces from Feb. 7-March 31 at its Cone Room (RCBC Plaza, corner Ayala and Gil Puyat Avenues, Makati).

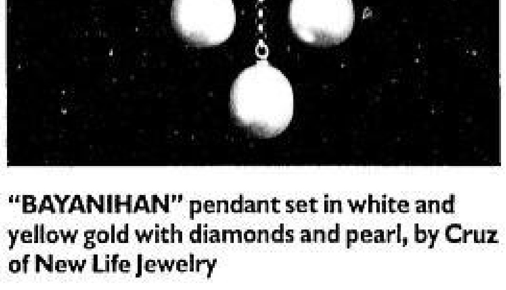
Call 7281722/26 or 8891234.



"C PENDANT" has *kamagong*, gold, silver and leather; by Marianne Frisnedi of Sterling Gifts, Inc.



"ANAHAW Palm" bangle in white and yellow gold, by Pascual Validor of Rafael Jewelry



"BAYANIHAN" pendant set in white and yellow gold with diamonds and pearl, by Cruz of New Life Jewelry

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ENTERTAINMENT

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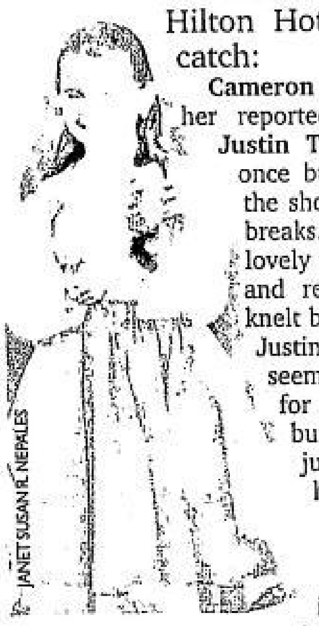
ANGELINA Jolie patiently waits as Brad Pitt chats with the red carpet media. RUBEN V NEPALES

What the cameras did not catch at the 64th Golden Globe Awards

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA—Here are some scenes that the cameras at the 64th Golden Globe Awards at the International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton Hotel failed to catch:



JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

ABIGAIL Breslin of "Little Miss Sunshine"

Cameron Diaz went to her reported ex-boyfriend, **Justin Timberlake**, not once but twice during the show's commercial breaks. The actress, lovely in a white gown and red, red lipstick, knelt before the seated Justin. No, she did not seem to be pleading for a reconciliation but she appeared to just want to talk to her supposed ex. It was good to see that they were on speaking terms.

Angelina was the most beautiful bystander on the red carpet. As her husband, Golden Globe Best Supporting Actor **Brad Pitt**, was being interviewed by Mary Hart up in the platform of "Entertainment Tonight (ET)," she stood by down on the red carpet. Angelina's off-shoulder gown tantalizingly displayed her tattoos. She gamely posed for our cameras.

CAMERON DIAZ REUTERS

By not going up "ET's" platform, she saved herself—and Brad—from ignominy by being invited to ride on a rotating mini-stage. The revolving stage was meant to show off a star's outfit in all degrees but those who gamely stepped up on that stage looked like embarrassed dolls in a music box or fashionable offerings on a Lazy Susan.

REESE WITHERSPOON AP

With so many top stars to choose from, the folks behind the platforms lining up the red carpet, from "ET," "E!" to "Access Hollywood," sometimes had to turn down big names. I heard several big names being turned down, with spiels that went like this, "(Name of star), I love you but…"

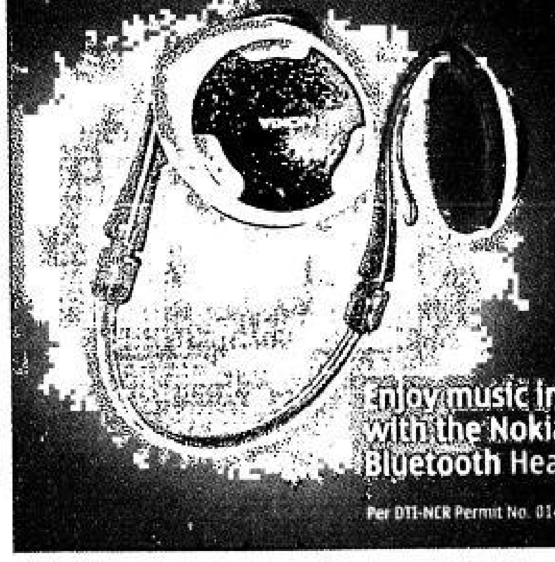
* * *

Our additional volunteer job of making sure these platform shows stayed within our four-minute max rule of their interviews with stars (to keep the star traffic flowing) came with a risk—the glare of an actress if we acci-

WHAT/ F4

JENNIFER Hudson shows off her first Golden Globe award. JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

"ENTERTAINMENT Tonight" host Mary Hart JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES



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3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 AGENT X44
9 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
10 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11 BLOOD DIAMOND
12 AGENT X44

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SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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6 AGENT X44

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2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
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1 ERAGON • THX
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

2 AGENT X44
12.30 2.50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 indieSine's Digital Cinema
Bagong Agos Film Festival

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
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5 DEJA VU
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6 SAW 3
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7 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
12:30 2.50 5:10 7:30 9:50

8 BLOOD DIAMOND
12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40

9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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10 ROB-B-HOOD
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1 DEJA VU
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2 ROB-B-HOOD 12:00 2:15
BLOOD DIAMOND 4:40 7:20 10:00

3 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
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4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8190

1 ROB-B-HOOD
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2 AGENT X44
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3 DEJA VU
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NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 SAW 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ROB-B-HOOD

PIONEER 687-5378

1 DEJA VU
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2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
1:40 4 00 6 20 8 40

3 AGENT X44
1:40 4 00 6.20 8:40

4 SAW 3
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Set in the minefields of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they fumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Pierce (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connelly), is the family breadwinner.

When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to harass a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGorvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their not-so-responsible actions. It is bitingly funny and nakedly honest, critique of middle class dysfunction.

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CHEER FACTOR

Yes, they said these

OVERHEARD AT THE Globes:

"I swear I have my papers in order. Governor, I swear." — Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, accepting "Babel" award from California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

***

"I'm staring at Jack Nicholson, Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty. This is surreal." — Shonda Rhimes, creator and executive producer of "Grey's Anatomy," Best TV Drama Series.

***

"Thank you to every American who has not sued me so far." — Sacha Baron Cohen, Best Actor for Comedy ("Borat").

***

"I'm glad this isn't too heavy because I just had hernia surgery (Dec. 21). I just wanted to share that with all of you." — Alec Baldwin, Best Actor in a TV Musical or Comedy)"30 Rock").

***

"Elizabeth I would have an amazing speech at this point wouldn't she? 'Thank you,' and then she would get very humble and then she'd be teary and then she'd be powerful. I have nothing to say but, 'Thank you very much. I had an incredible role.'" — Helen Mirren, Best Actress in a TV Miniseries or Movie ("Elizabeth I").

***

"If I have on an inch of makeup, I can do anything." —Eddie Murphy, Movie Supporting Actor ("Dreamgirls").

***

"You don't know what this does for my confidence." — Clint Eastwood, Foreign Language Film "Letters From Iwo Jima").

***

"You do not know how much this does for my confidence ... It makes me feel like I'm part of a community and it makes me feel like I'm an actress." — Jennifer Hudson, Supporting Actress ("Dreamgirls").

***

"I think I've worked with everybody in the room. Yes, I have." — Meryl Streep, Best Actress in a Musical or Comedy ("The Devil Wears Prada").

***

"I live in Ireland and I forget all of you ... I can't remember your names."—Jeremy Irons, Best Supporting Actor in a TV Miniseries ("Elizabeth I").

***

"This show has been such an amazing gift, an unexpected gift, which is the very, very best kind."—Kyra Sedgwick, Best Actress in a TV Drama ("The Closer").

***

"Oh God. Thank you so much. This is ... whew!"—Emily Blunt, Best Supporting Actress in a TV Miniseries ("Gideon's Daughter") *AP*

Luck of the draw

From page F4

"banker," because they want to make even more money by pushing the game into the next round. Alas, that's usually when the really big amount themselves, thus drastically reducing the "greedy" players' final take-home loot.

This is what happened last Dec. 25, when **Boy Abunda** tried to win a bundle for the people in his hometown in Samar. The banker had already offered him hundreds of thousands of pesos, but Boy wanted more, so he took the game to yet another round and ended up with only P10,000 for his pains.

This was a crushing blow, but it wasn't as dire as what happened to **Roderick Paulate** and **Efren "Bata" Reyes**, who went home with only a paltry peso each, boo-hoo.

So, the rule for future players should be: If the pot hits P100,000 or P200,000, resist all "greedy" impulses and accept the banker's and Kris Aquino's deal—or suffer the consequences.

Million pot

ONLY a few days after we had written the piece above, "Deal or No Deal" finally got its first P2 million winner—fully six months after the game show had started telecasting on a weeknight basis.

The winner was a supremely confident young man who didn't make a false move throughout the long game. Luck was clearly with him as he first opened the suitcases with the low amounts, thus jacking the show's resident banker's offers up to the hundreds of thousands, then to the millions.

Even more happily, subsequent contestants were the first to benefit from the game show's beefed-up top prize—from the P2 million, to P4 million!

As the game is now played with the bigger top prize up for grabs, we serve a new excitement in everyone involved—the contestants, the studio audience. Even the host **Kris Aquino**.

It was a really astute move to double the game's pot, because it set the show apart from other game programs, many of which offer a couple of million bucks in potential top winnings. With its new P4 million pot, "Deal" is now the best game show to beat.

But, luck remains the game's most crucial factor. If you're lucky and have ice water running in your veins, you can win big. However, if you're unlucky, not all the bravado in the world can turn the negative tide.

The following night, it was Sen. **Bong Revilla**'s turn to "deal," and he won "only" P300,000. The night after that, the female contestant was a looker and was really determined to win, but she went home with a peso less than P10,000.

Well that's the luck of the draw!

More for Mowelfund

THROUGH the years, the Metro film fest's subsidy to the Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation has been dramatically reduced. At the start, Mowelfund was the festival's sole beneficiary. In 1986, the subsidy was decreased to 60 percent of amusement taxes generated, and in 2002 it was again brought down to 35 percent.

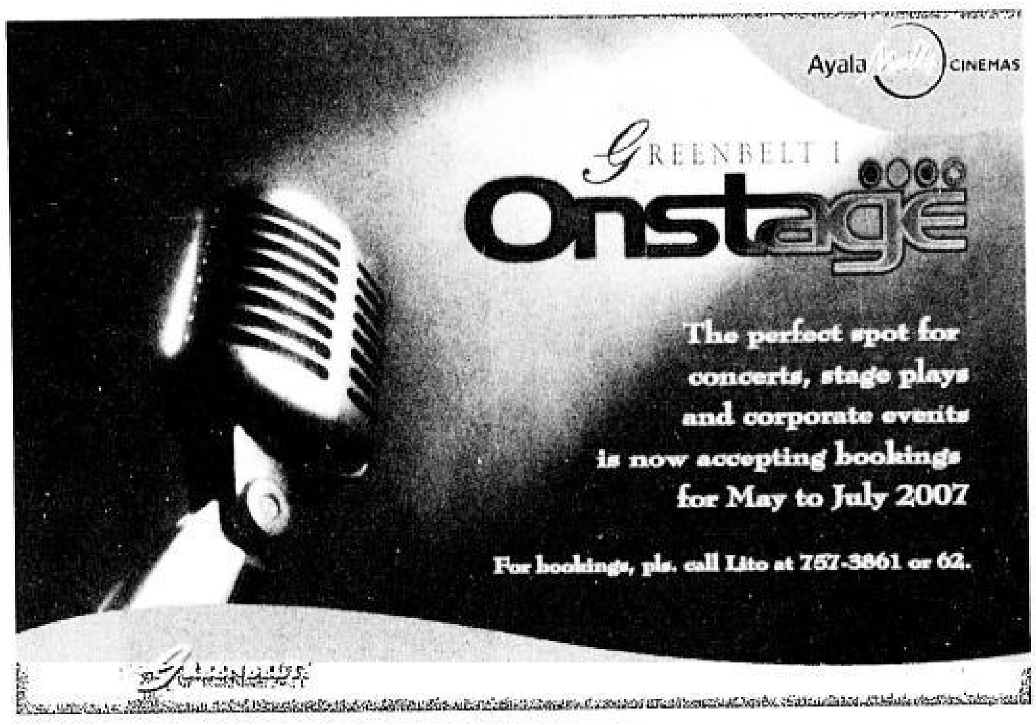
In 2005, Mowelfund received only P4.5 million from the MMFF subsidy. The welfare organization's annual budget is P13 million. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure out that something is sorely amiss—and awry.

To make up for the yawning gap, Mowelfund's **Boots Anson-Roa** has imaginatively come up with all sorts of ways—from *ukay-ukay* to celebrity golf tournaments—to fill the foundation's coffers.

But the difference is simply too big to be patched up by diverse fund-raisers, so we trust that MMFF executives will see it fit and just to restore the 60 percent subsidy.

After all, thousands of movie workers and their families are relying on Mowelfund for health, education, burial and other benefits.

Perhaps the movie industry's leading lights, spearheaded by the likes of **Susan Roces**, other major stars, legislators from the entertainment field, and respected film families like the **Vera-Perezes, De Leons** and **Santiagos** can join Boots Anson-Roa in underscoring the urgency of this request, so that more people become aware of it, listen—and act.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ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES 1:45 / 4.20 / 6.55 / 9:30	ROB-B-HOOD 1:10 / 4:00 / 6.50 / 9:40	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40	
ERAGON 12:20 / 2.40 / 5.00 / 7 20 / 9:50	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3.10 / 5 20 / 7:30 / 9:40	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1 05 / 4.00 / 6:55 / 9 50	DEJAVU 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00

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GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	3 INNOCENT VOICES GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SAW 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS		
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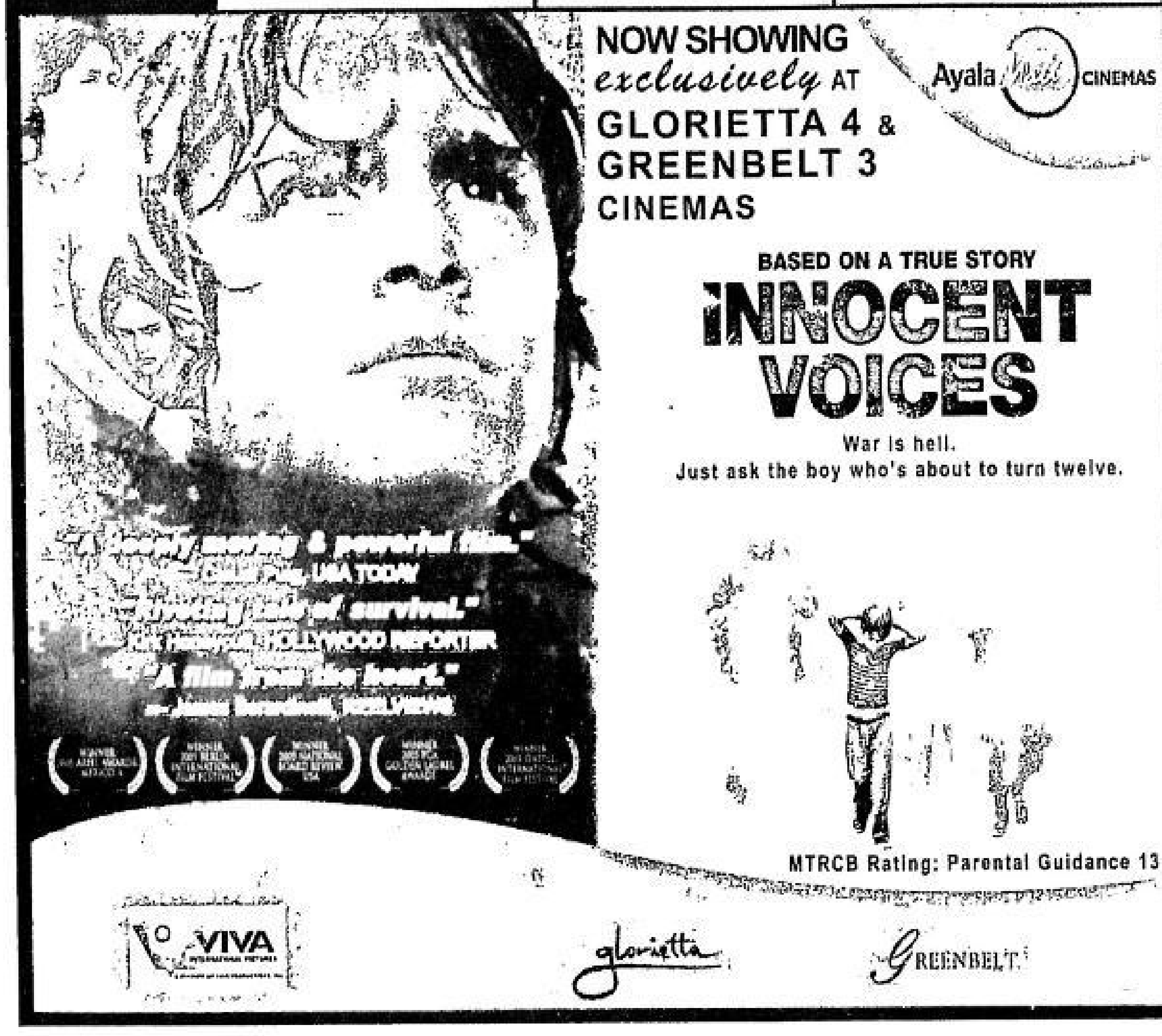
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Luck of the draw

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT'S BOTH A WONDERMENT AND A PUZZLEMENT, but ever since it began telecasting months ago, Channel 2's weeknight game show, "Deal or No Deal," has yet to award its full P2 million prize to any of its scores upon scores of players thus far (at least as of this writing, Dec. 27).

A couple have won around P1 million each, but that's about it. Worse, some celebrity players have even gone home with P 1 (apiece) for their pains!

What is it about the game show that makes it so difficult for its players to win big? It's based on sheer luck, with a player's fate being sealed by the choice he makes of a particular briefcase to place his hopes on at the start of the game.

So, if he chooses a briefcase containing a small amount, nothing he does during the game can substantially affect its outcome for him.

It's for this reason that, although we watch the program from time to time, we haven't given it the involvement we invest in other, more skills-oriented game shows on the tube. Players can scream and shake but their fate is sealed.

Another major factor that reduces players' winnings is the "greed" motive that pushes contestants to reject already substantial deals from the show's resident

LUCK/ F3

What the cameras didn't…

From page F1

SHARON STONE AP

dentally stepped on her flowing gown.

Sharon Stone's date was writer and frequent Vanity Fair contributor, **Dominick Dunne.**

Abigail Breslin was as cute as a, well, "Little Miss Sunshine," on the red carpet.

Sheryl Crow, with her bare arms and long blonde tresses, could—surprise, surprise—out-pose them all. She was a pro before all the photographers screaming her name.

BEYONCE KNOWLES AP

SOPHIE OKONEDO AP

Access Hollywood had a bartender who was costumed to look like **Borat**, bad wig and all. A couple of these platforms were mixing drinks and making espresso right on the red carpet.

Beyonce was a blinding presence in her figure-hugging, sparkly gold gown.

We unexpectedly confirmed the talk that this couple, who host this entertainment show, are not actually that friendly off-camera. We saw how the male host simmered when his female colleague grabbed an interview with a star.

Peter Gyllenhaal also stood by as his wife, Best Actress nominee **Maggie Gyllenhaal**, struck poses for the clamoring photographers. We teased him that there was a time when we interviewed him almost every month. "I have three movies coming up this year so I'll be seeing you," he said. Then he joined Maggie, who gave birth to their baby girl, for loving poses before the fotogs.

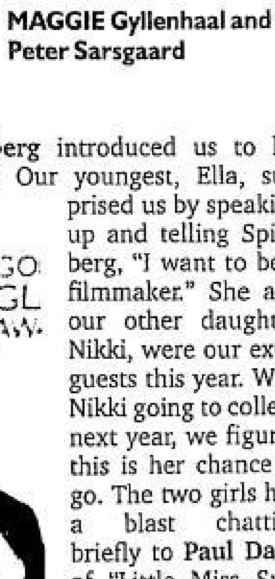
Many stars were naturally poised, ready to face the cameras

STEVEN Spielberg with his daughter Sasha AP

Some stars are just like you and me. At the start of the red carpet line, they looked nervous or scared. They depended on their publicists to guide them through the bewildering mass of media lining up the path to the hotel lobby. Many were naturally poised, ready to face the cameras but for several, it must be the longest walk of their lives.

One of the most elegant, simply because she was low-key and looked really classy, was **Sophie Okonedo**, Best Actress in a Mini-Series or TV Movie for her turn in "Tsunami, the Aftermath."

Reese Witherspoon was in a hot yellow dress onstage—what better way to say, "I'm free!"



MAGGIE Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard AP

At the Warner Bros/InStyle party, which had the most tempting Godiva chocolate offerings, actor **Terrence Howard** asked a lady minding the sweets bar, "Which one has nuts?"

With a live band, this was the party to be again. It's what we expect from those trendsetters at InStyle.

Steven Spielberg introduced us to his daughter, Sasha. Our youngest, Ella, surprised us by speaking up and telling Spielberg, "I want to be a filmmaker." She and our other daughter, Nikki, were our extra guests this year. With Nikki going to college next year, we figured this is her chance to go. The two girls had a blast chatting briefly to **Paul Dano** of "Little Miss Sunshine" and **Jennifer Hudson.**

TERRENCE HOWARD REUTERS

The Fox party is still going strong at the Penthouse ballroom of the Hilton as we write this. We can hear the music throbbing up on our hotel room's ceiling because we are just one floor down. To party or to write? You know which impulse won because you are reading this.

SHERYL CROW AFP

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

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MTRCB GP
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MTRCB R-13
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④ DÉJÀ VU
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Feb 13 & 14, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM

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BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:25,4:25,7:25,10:25	ROB-B-HOOD PG13 12:50,3:20,5:50 SAW III R18 8:20,10:30	DÉJÀ VU PG13 12:10,2:45,5:20, 7:55,10:30

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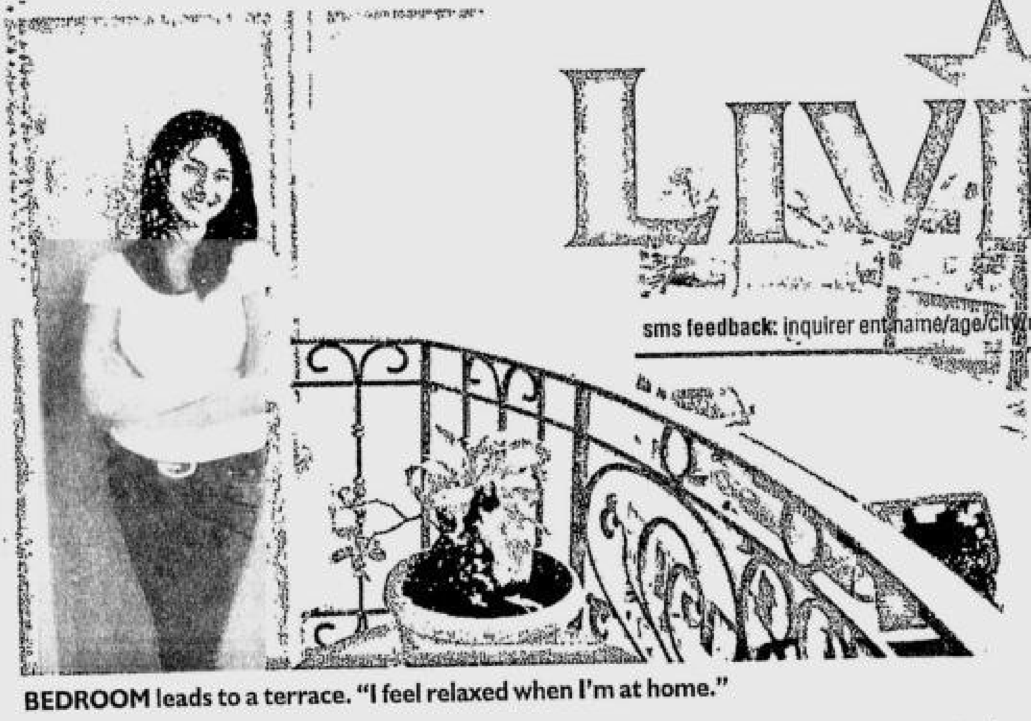
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

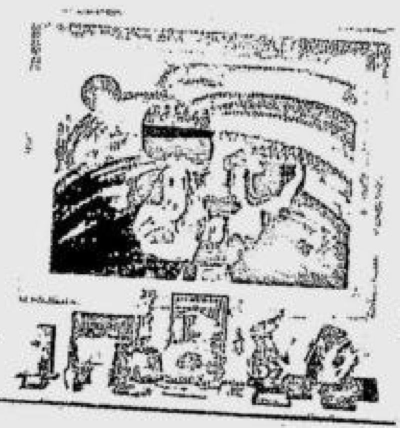
LIVING Stars

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph



BEDROOM leads to a terrace. "I feel relaxed when I'm at home."



THE TROPHY table in the living room is laden with various industry awards. The ER Tagle painting is a Christmas gift.

A sweet reward

Jennylyn Mercado has turned her two-story home from a mannish pad into a decidedly feminine abode

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Photos by Romy Homillada

ORIGINALLY, THIS QUEZON CITY HOME looked too mannish for a singer-actress as dainty as Jennylyn Mercado.

"When I first moved in two years ago, the paint was black and white. There was a black leather sofa in the living room. Even the dining set was black," she recounts.

It looked like a bachelor's pad. "Too boring. So I decided to liven it up."

With dispatch, she imbued the two-story home with a decidedly feminine touch. "I had the walls repainted apple green, lilac, yellow, orange and white."

She didn't hire a professional interior decorator and just relied on her instincts.

"I chose the furniture pieces and décor, with the help of my Mommy Lydia," she says.

Her fans and friends also contributed pieces here and there.

The "photo mosaic" portrait in her bedroom is a gift from a loyal follower. "She also gifted me with a bed sheet emblazoned with my portrait."

The ER Tagle painting in the living room is a Christmas gift from a friend to Mommy Lydia.

The white teddy bear that sits on the Yamaha drum set's stool is a present from boyfriend and fellow *Kapuso* Patrick Garcia. The red stuffed toy dog on the bed is a Christmas gift from *ka*-love team and fellow "Starstruck" winner Mark Herras.

The home, she asserts, is sweet reward for all the sacrifices of the past three years.

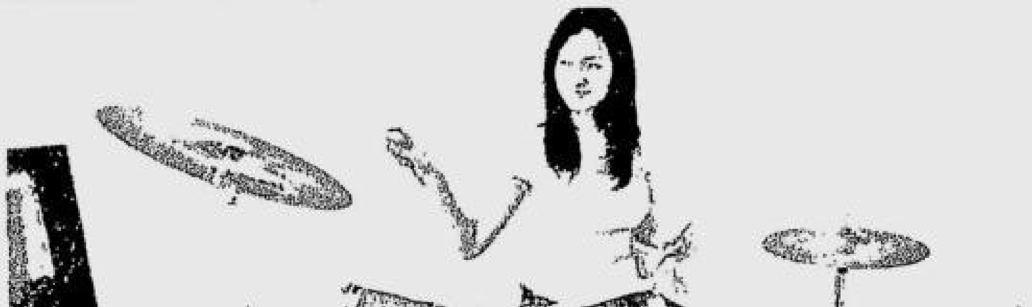
Guardian Lydia is proud and happy that Jennylyn was able to invest in a house-and-lot at a young age. She had just turned 18 when

A SWEET/ G4

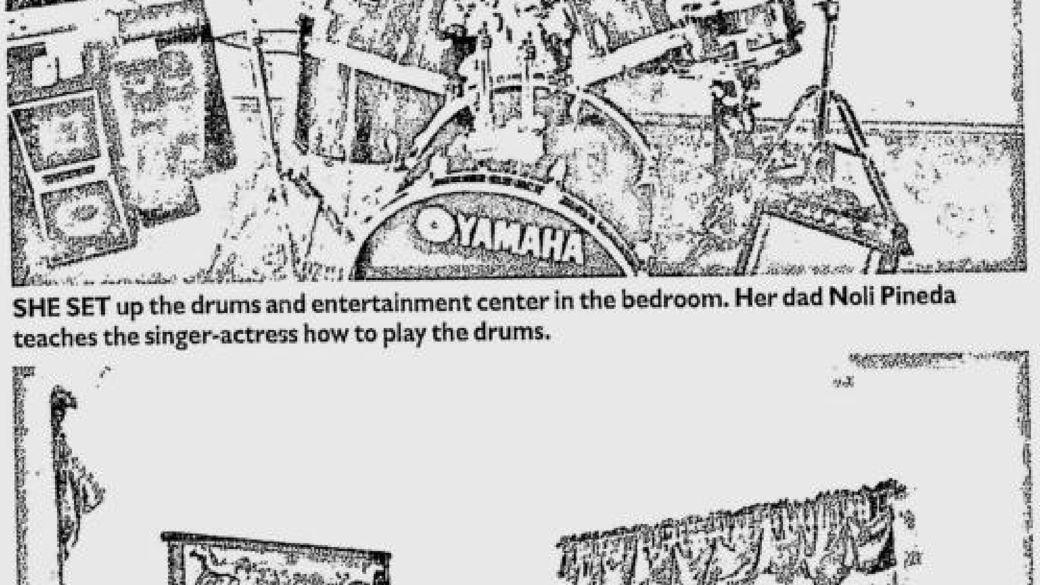
HOME – BODY

THE KITCHEN is as dainty as the home's young owner.

POCKET garden lends a laidback, rustic feel to the city home. Looking at the garden helps her alleviate "stress," she says.



SHE SET up the drums and entertainment center in the bedroom. Her dad Noli Pineda teaches the singer-actress how to play the drums.



SHE IMBUED the living room with a feminine touch by putting in apple green drapes, modish throw pillows and colorful sofas.

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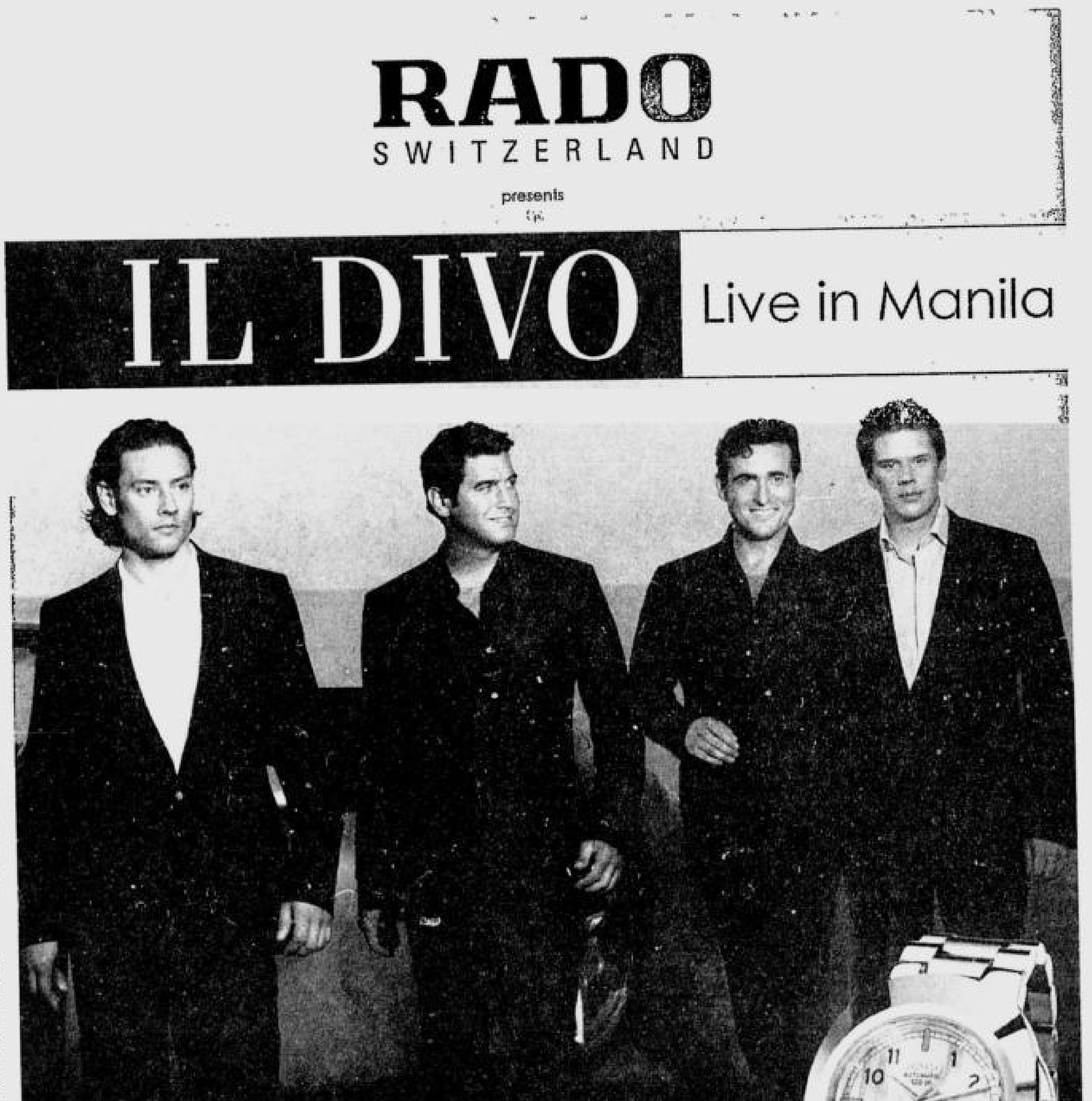
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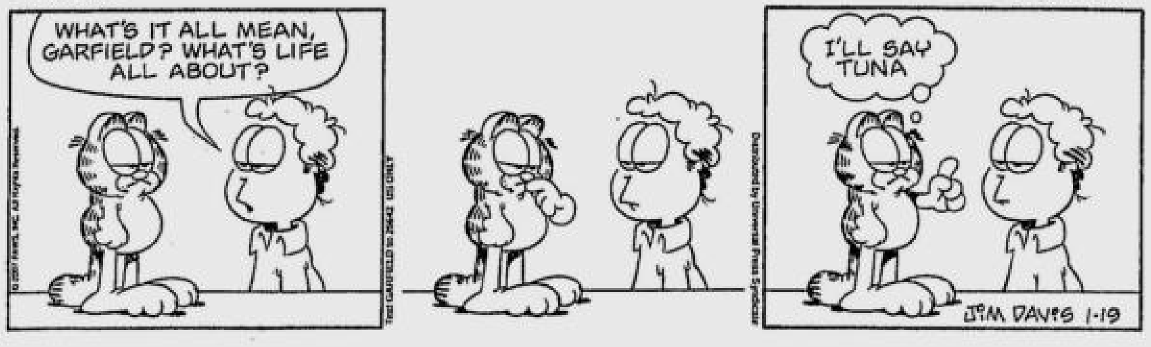
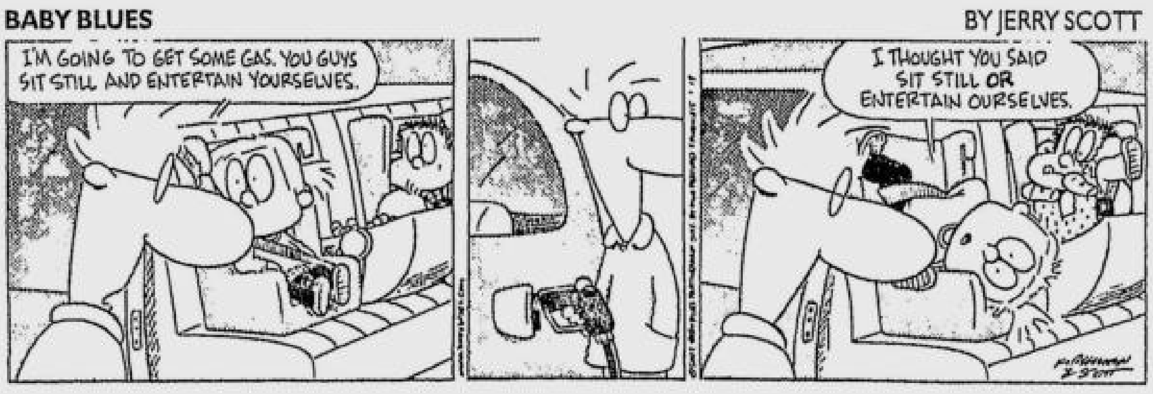
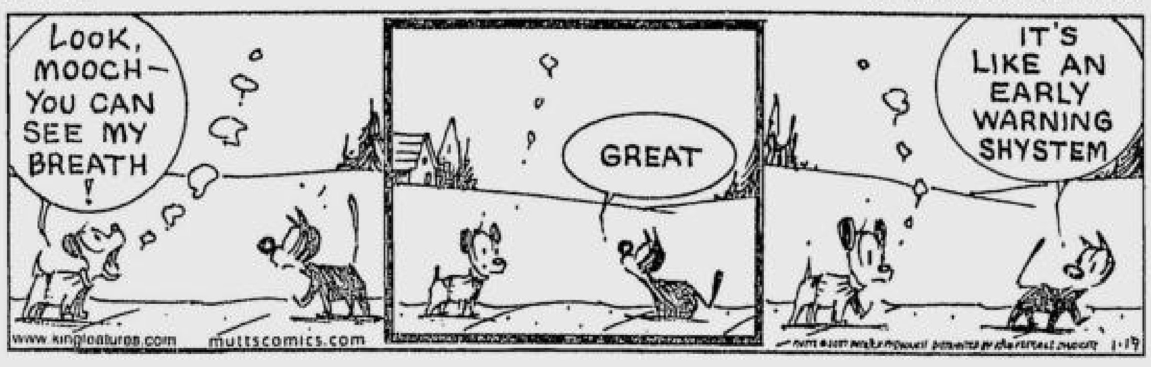
GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS


WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN, GARFIELD? WHAT'S LIFE ALL ABOUT?
I'LL SAY TUNA
JIM DAVIS 1-19

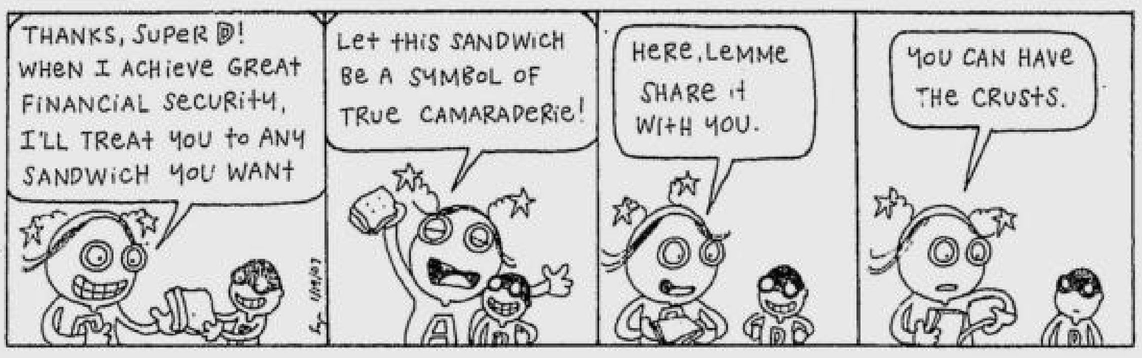
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M GOING TO GET SOME GAS. YOU GUYS SIT STILL AND ENTERTAIN YOURSELVES.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID SIT STILL OR ENTERTAIN OURSELVES.

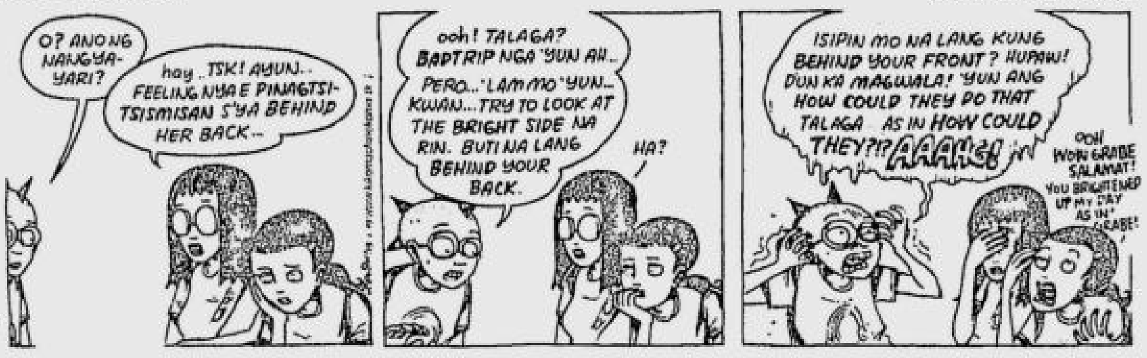
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOK, MOOCH— YOU CAN SEE MY BREATH!
GREAT
IT'S LIKE AN EARLY WARNING SHYSTEM
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
1-19

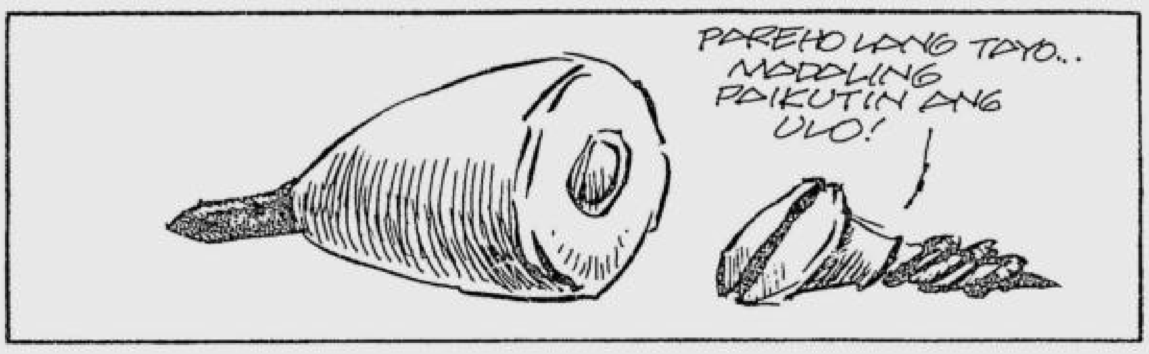
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THANKS, SUPER D! WHEN I ACHIEVE GREAT FINANCIAL SECURITY, I'LL TREAT YOU TO ANY SANDWICH YOU WANT
LET THIS SANDWICH BE A SYMBOL OF TRUE CAMARADERIE!
HERE, LEMME SHARE IT WITH YOU.
YOU CAN HAVE THE CRUSTS.

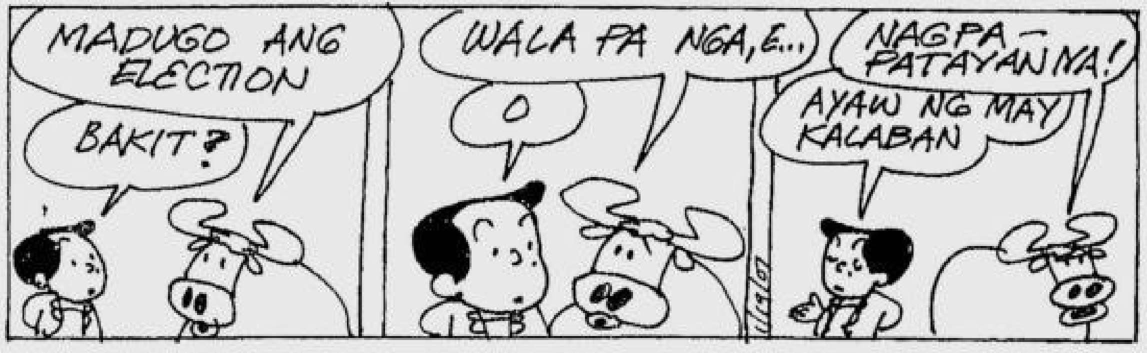
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


O? ANONG NANGYAYARI?
hay.. TSK! AYUN.. FEELING NYA E PINAGTSITSISMISAN S'YA BEHIND HER BACK..
ooh! TALAGA? BADTRIP NGA 'YUN AH.. PERO..'LAM MO 'YUN.. KWAN...TRY TO LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE NA RIN. BUTI NA LANG BEHIND YOUR BACK.
HA?
ISIPIN MO NA LANG KUNG BEHIND YOUR FRONT? HUPAW! DUN KA MAGWALA! 'YUN ANG HOW COULD THEY DO THAT TALAGA AS IN HOW COULD THEY?!? AAAHG!
OOH WOW GRABE SALAMAT! YOU BRIGHTENED UP MY DAY AS IN GRABE!

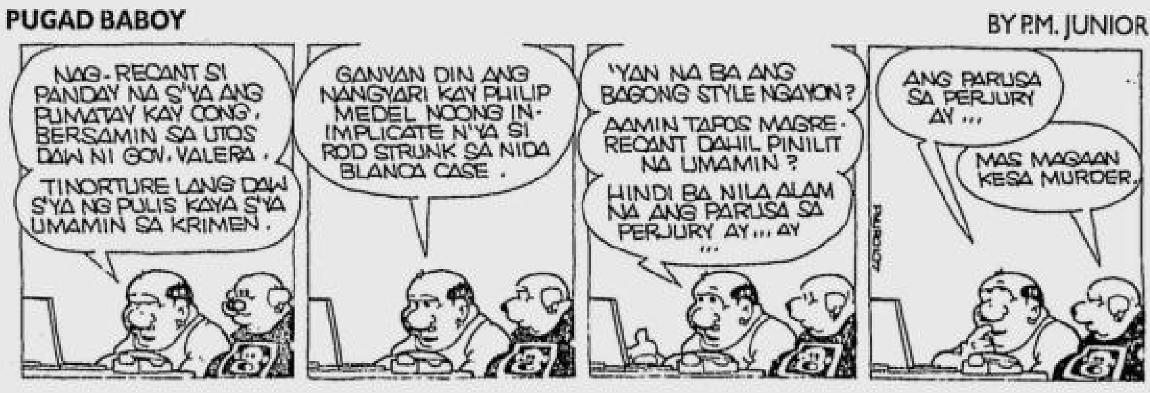
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PAREHO LANG TAYO... MADALING PAIKUTIN ANG ULO!

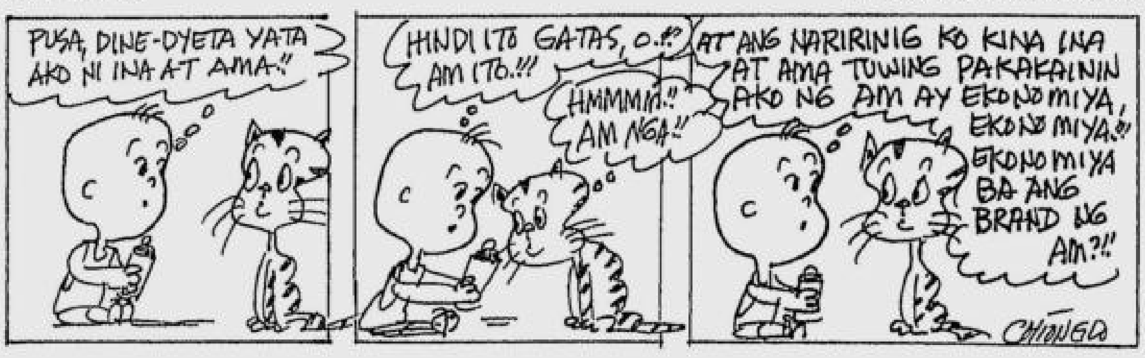
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MADUGO ANG ELECTION
BAKIT?
WALA PA NGA, E...
O
NAGPA-PATAYAN NA!
AYAW NG MAY KALABAN

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

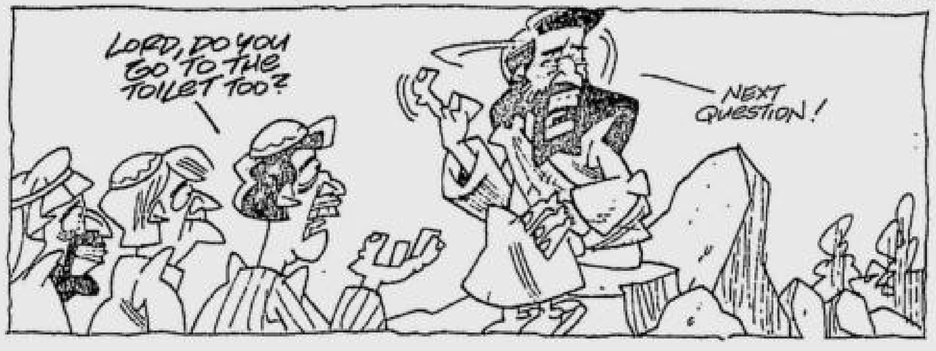

NAG-RECANT SI PANDAY NA S'YA ANG PUMATAY KAY CONG. BERSAMIN SA UTOS DAW NI GOV. VALERA.
TINORTURE LANG DAW S'YA NG PULIS KAYA S'YA UMAMIN SA KRIMEN.
GANYAN DIN ANG NANGYARI KAY PHILIP MEDEL NOONG IN-IMPLICATE N'YA SI ROD STRUNK SA NIDA BLANCA CASE.
'YAN NA BA ANG BAGONG STYLE NGAYON?
AAMIN TAPOS MAGRE-RECANT DAHIL PINILIT NA UMAMIN?
HINDI BA NILA ALAM NA ANG PARUSA SA PERJURY AY... AY ...
ANG PARUSA SA PERJURY AY...
MAS MAGAAN KESA MURDER.

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

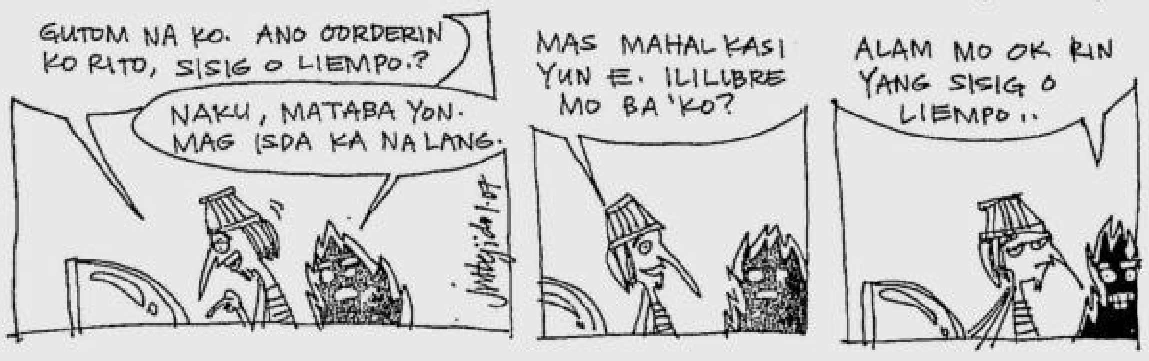

PUSA, DINE-DYETA YATA AKO NI INA AT AMA!!
HINDI ITO GATAS, O..!! AM ITO.!!!
HMMMM!! AM NGA!!
AT ANG NARIRINIG KO KINA INA AT AMA TUWING PAKAKAININ AKO NG AM AY EKONOMIYA, EKONOMIYA!!
EKONOMIYA BA ANG BRAND NG AM?!!
CHIONGLO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

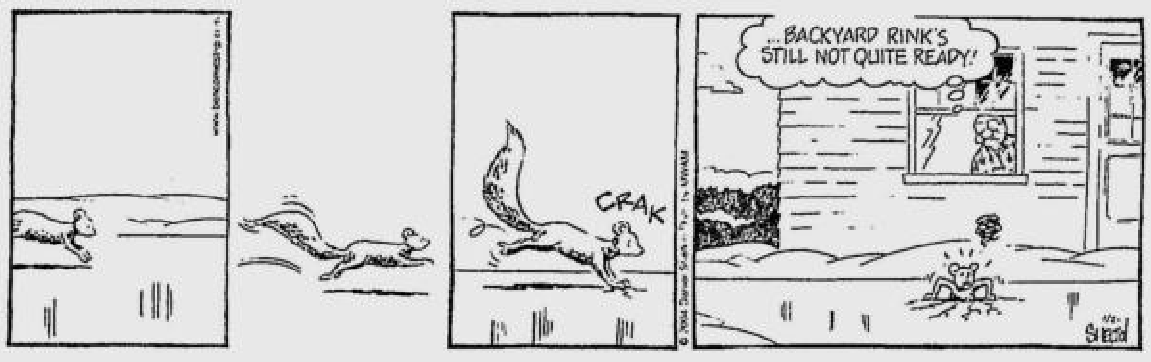
THE ONE TRUTH CHRISTIANS HATE TO ADMIT


LORD, DO YOU GO TO THE TOILET TOO?
NEXT QUESTION!

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

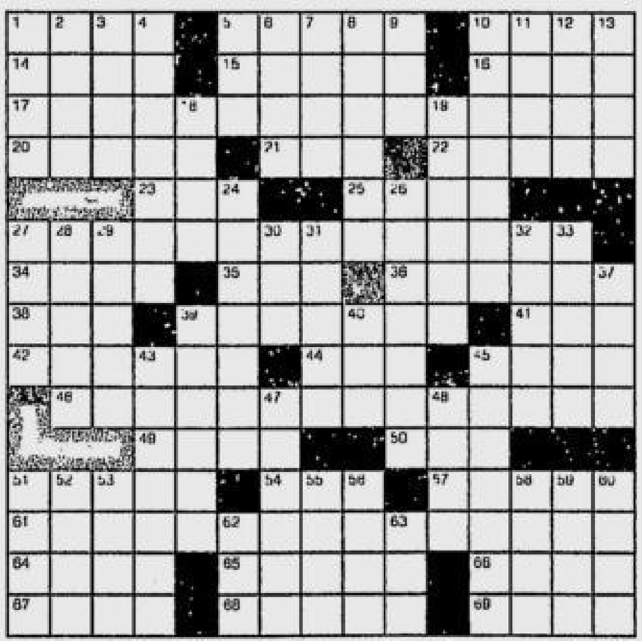

GUTOM NA KO. ANO OORDERIN KO RITO, SISIG O LIEMPO.?
NAKU, MATABA YON. MAG ISDA KA NA LANG.
MAS MAHAL KASI YUN E. ILILIBRE MO BA 'KO?
ALAM MO OK RIN YANG SISIG O LIEMPO..

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


CRAK
...BACKYARD RINK'S STILL NOT QUITE READY!

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Cartographic creations
5 Man in a whale
10 Warmth
14 Old World continent
15 Think the world of
16 Nevada town
17 Hope role
20 Tropical wader
21 Canape topper
22 Minutes taker, perhaps
23 Latin eggs
25 U.S. rocket launchers
27 Bonaduce role
34 Arabian garb
35 Season opener?
36 Stun guns
38 Take the odds
39 Arrives by air
41 Short drink
42 Spoof
44 Female sib
45 12-point type
46 Sothern role
49 Apart from this
50 Mystery writer Grafton
51 Island west of Maui
54 Step into character
57 Bumped off
61 Harris role
64 Paul of "Scarface"
65 Take the tiller
66 Trademark DOS
67 Spoiled child
68 Fictitious
69 Dry run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By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL
1/19/07

DOWN
1 SAT section
2 U.S. Open stadium
3 Landing place
4 Oater bars
5 Traffic tie-up
6 Scent
7 Double negative?
8 Fervent
9 That woman
10 Groups of seven
11 Actress Sommer
12 Related by blood (to)
13 Ruckus
18 Grudging praise
19 3rd-century Gaelic bard
24 Small pieces of computer code
26 Manet and Monet
27 Light touches
28 Crosswise, nautically
29 Dapper
30 Jackie's Onassis
31 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"
32 Photo finish?
33 Novelist Jong
37 Box to train
39 Romp
40 Formal address
43 No foolin' now!
45 Burn rubber
47 Part of OSHA
48 Pipe down!
51 Ewe offspring
52 Manchurian border river
53 Sten title role
55 Nile queen, briefly
56 Ager of parents?
58 English composer
59 Sister of Osiris
60 Immediately following
62 Horned viper
63 Sardonic

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

F	A	D	E	■	E	S	T	E	■	T	B	A	R	S
O	G	R	E	■	A	L	E	X	■	R	O	P	E	S
G	E	A	R	■	R	E	N	T	■	Y	U	R	T	S
I	N	G	O	D	W	E	T	R	U	S	T	■	■	■
E	C	O	■	R	A	T	■	O	T	T	■	S	A	W
S	Y	N	T	A	X	■	C	V	I	■	A	M	M	O
■	■	F	A	N	■	S	H	E	L	■	L	O	I	N
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E	R	I	K	■	H	I	R	T	■	W	R	Y	■	■
V	I	E	S	■	R	B	I	■	S	A	M	P	L	E
E	D	S	■	W	E	E	■	P	A	N	■	L	A	T
■	■	■	T	H	E	P	O	L	Y	G	R	A	P	H
C	A	N	O	E	■	A	L	A	I	■	O	C	T	A
I	N	E	R	T	■	R	E	I	N	■	N	E	O	N
A	D	Z	E	S	■	K	O	N	G	■	A	S	P	S

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1/19/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Whatever you do, you're over-the-top and definitely memorable. You have a wild and crazy side. You never hesitate to share your opinions. Because your ideals are sometimes extreme, your life can be a roller coaster. This year, however, you'll be more focused on partnerships and close friendships. (These relationships will help you learn more about yourself.)

Birthdate of: Edgar Allan Poe, writer; Dolly Parton, singer/actress; Paula Deen, TV cook/author.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Friendships can become cozy today. In fact, a platonic relationship might move into a romantic stage. Either way, you feel very loving toward others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you are asked to give artistic input where you work, accept the task. Right now, your skills are ready for this. Plus, bosses think very highly of your abilities now

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): If you can travel for pleasure at this time, do it. You will also enjoy exploring new ideas and new subjects. You want to expand your world this week.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be in a position to show compassion or offer help to someone who is less fortunate than you. (Possibly, the shoe is on the other foot.) Either way, something is mutually beneficial between you and someone else.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel very loving toward partners and close friends now. Be careful that you do not idealize a romantic relationship way out of proportion.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be generous and helpful to coworkers today. In turn, others will be just as supportive to you. Try it, and see what happens.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a marvelous day for the arts, sports, playful activities with children and—most definitely—romance! New love can blossom for many of you. Flirtations are exciting.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Buy something for your home or do something to make where you live look more attractive. This is a lovely day to entertain family at home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You definitely can see just how much love there is in your daily world. It's all too easy to miss as we deal with the busyness of our lives. Be aware of this today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have a chance to boost your earnings today. This could be related to shoes, the ocean, oil, gas, plastics, cosmetics, film or pharmaceuticals.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Relations with partners and close friends are very cozy today. It's easy to be warm and understanding. You'll enjoy your interaction with others.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Solitude in beautiful surroundings might please you today. You need some special, quiet time by yourself to pull things together. Do whatever it takes to give yourself a little bit of much-needed privacy.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			1			4		
			9		5	3		
4	5							
	7						9	3
				3				
8	2						1	
							7	6
		1	5		9			
		4			7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/19

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	7	6	1	9	3	8	4	5
3	4	9	2	8	5	7	6	1
8	5	1	6	4	7	9	2	3
7	2	4	8	6	1	5	3	9
9	1	3	5	7	4	2	8	6
5	6	8	9	3	2	1	7	4
6	3	5	7	2	9	4	1	8
4	9	2	3	1	8	6	5	7
1	8	7	4	5	6	3	9	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

DID YOU KNOW...

ARA MINA COLLECTS REFRIGERATOR magnets from her numerous travels—from Paris to Honolulu, from Bahrain to Tokyo. Gardo Versoza invested in gym equipment. Judy Ann Santos has a collection of cooking and baking implements. Ryan Agoncillo is into motorcycles, cameras and other photography accessories. Sharon Cuneta hoards on books, DVDs and coffee-brewing stuff.

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1 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
G

2 ERAGON
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
G

3 DÉJÀ VU
2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05
PG-13

4 SAW 3
12:45, 3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:40
R-18

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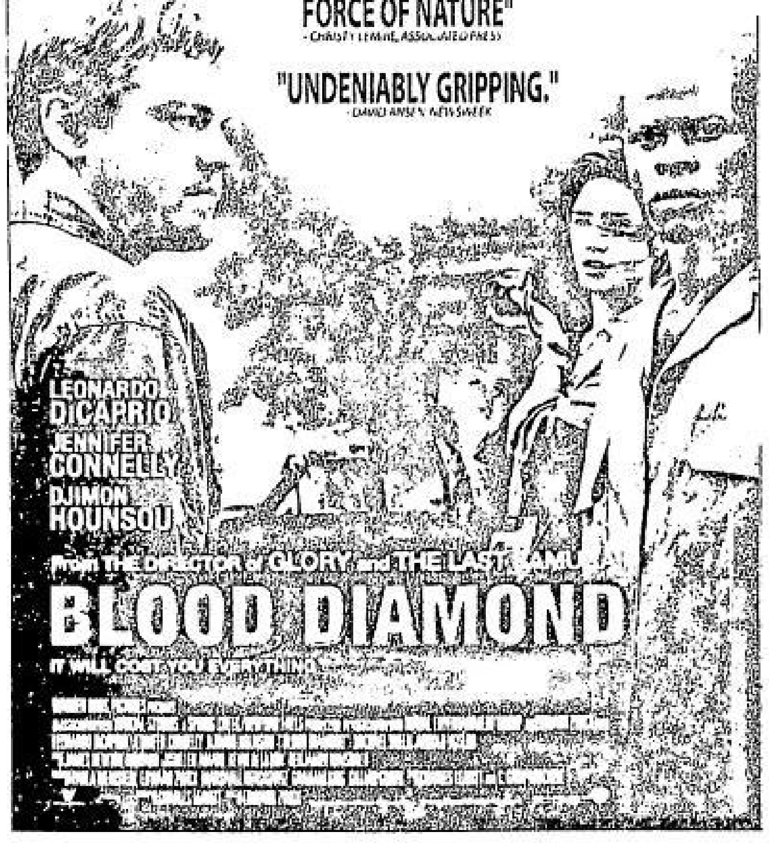
GENE SHALIT, TODAY SHOW
"A POWERFUL PERFORMANCE BY DJIMON HOUNSOU."
CLAUDIA PUIG, USA TODAY
"DiCAPRIO IS A FORMIDABLE FORCE OF NATURE"
- CHRISTY LEMIRE, ASSOCIATED PRESS
"UNDENIABLY GRIPPING."
- DAVID ANSEN, NEWSWEEK

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JENNIFER CONNELLY
DJIMON HOUNSOU
From THE DIRECTOR of GLORY and THE LAST SAMURAI
BLOOD DIAMOND
IT WILL COST YOU EVERYTHING

EXPERIENCE THE PHENOMENON
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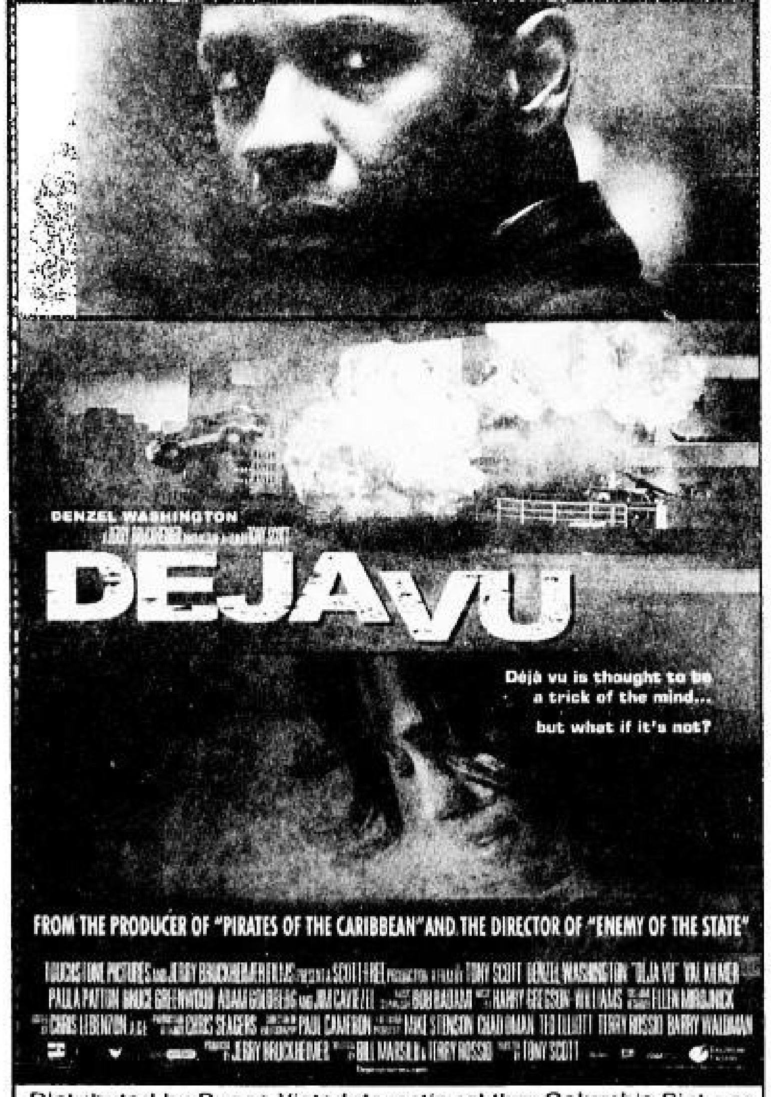
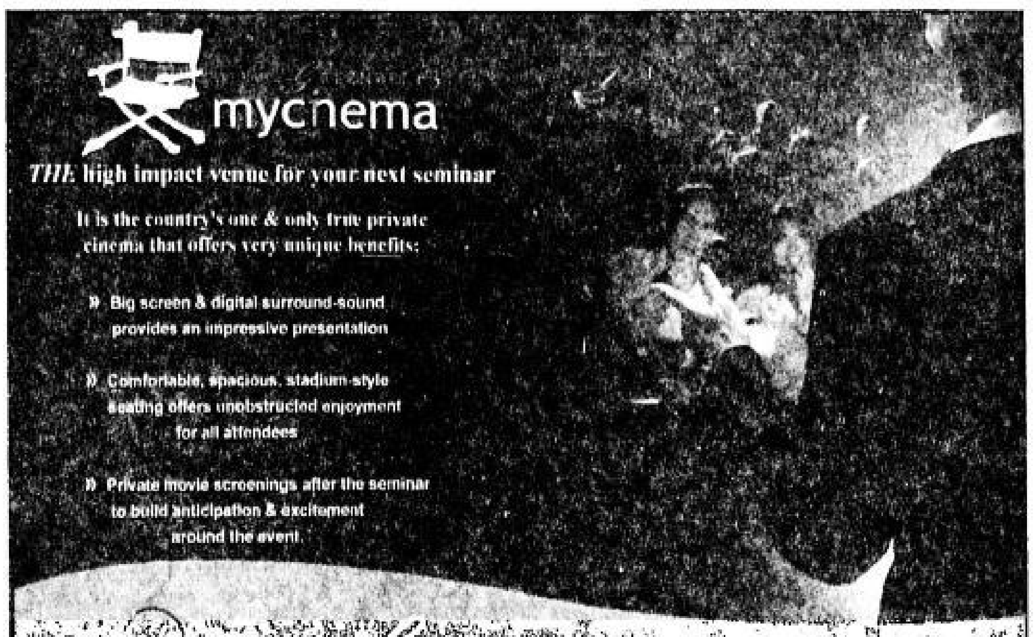

DENZEL WASHINGTON
DEJA VU
Déjà vu is thought to be a trick of the mind... but what if it's not?
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN" AND THE DIRECTOR OF "ENEMY OF THE STATE"
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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--- Peter Travers / ROLLING STONE
★★★★
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MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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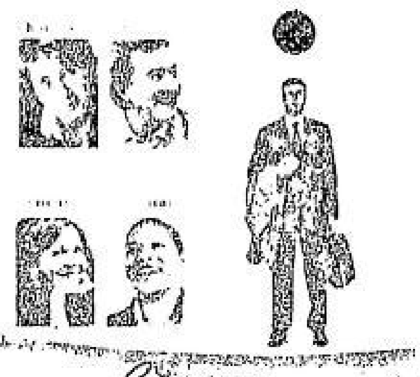
Will Ferrel
Stranger than Fiction

glorietta GREENBELT

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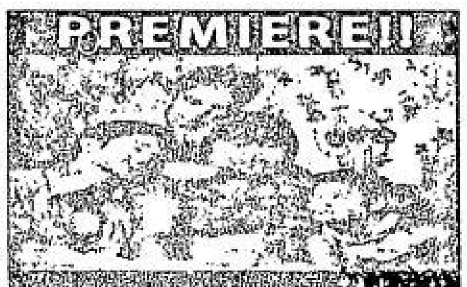
Cris Pablo's METLOGS Tomorrow at 9PM!
TOMORROW WILL BE PINK!
MASAHISTA
by Dante Mendoza at 11 AM!
ANG PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO
by Auraeus Solito at 1:30 PM!
COMPOUND
by Will Fredo at 4PM!
ROME AND JULIET
by Connie Macatuno at 6:30PM!
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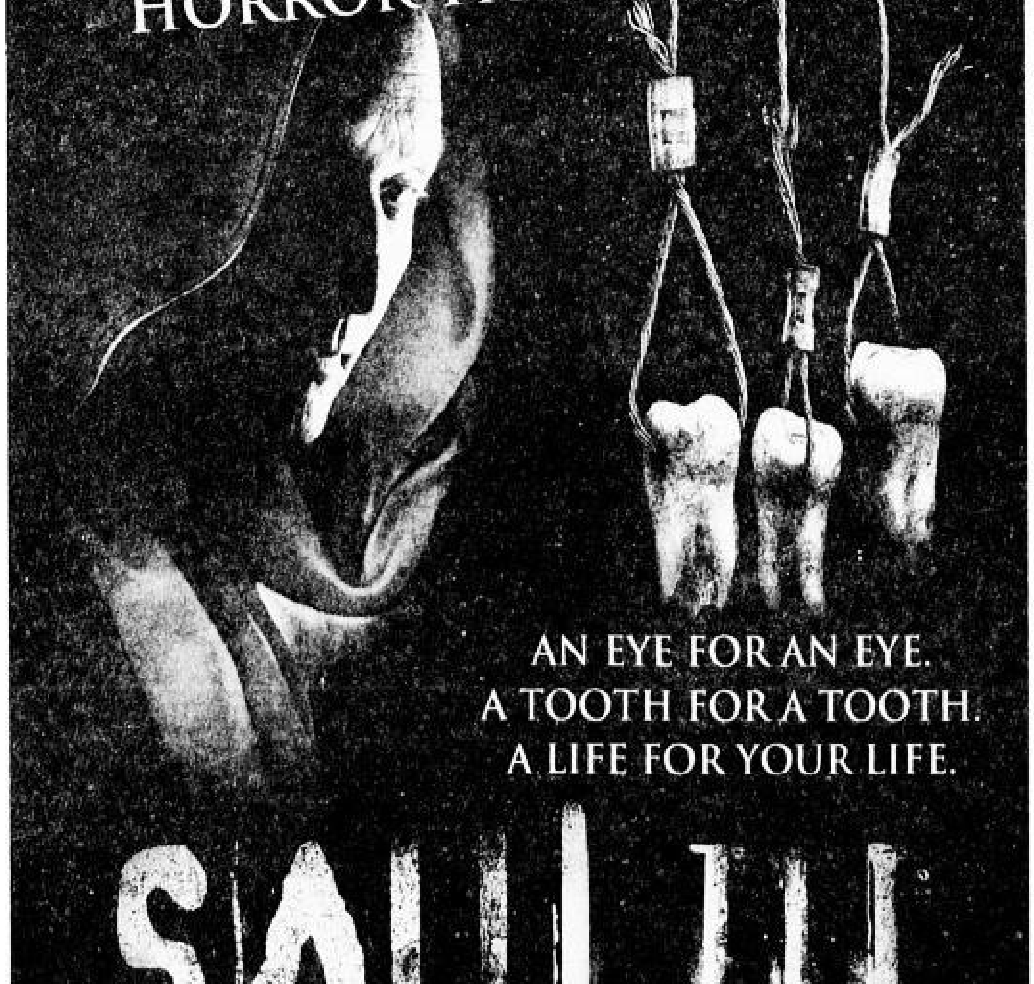
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MOVIE GUIDE
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1 ERAGON
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 DÉJÀ VU
PREMIERE
SAW 3

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1 ERAGON
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 AGENT X 44
4 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 AGENT X 44
4 DÉJÀ VU
5 RESRVED

metropolis star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8604266, 5433094
1 AGENT X 44
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 ERAGON
4 SAW

THEATRES
1 ERAGON
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 AGENT X 44
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMAS
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SAW
2 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 ERAGON
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 DÉJÀ VU
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 AGENT X 44
9 AGENT X 44
10 KASAL KASALI KASALO

Blue Wave MALL SUCAT
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Nino, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 ARTHUR & THE INVINSIBLES
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44
4 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES
5 SAW

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 AGENT X 44
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 AGENT X 44
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 SAW

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ERAGON
2 DÉJÀ VU

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 SAW
4 ERAGON

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MANO PO-5
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
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2 ERAGON
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 SAW 3

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ERAGON
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 AGENT X 44
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795 3320
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 AGENT X 44
2 MANO PO - 5

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 KASAL KASALI KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 PURI
3 SABIK SA HALIK
4 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 BABASAGIN CRYSTAL
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 AGENT X 44
5 ERAGON

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X 44
4 DÉJÀ VU

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030, 879.2029
1 ARTHUR & INVISIBLE
2 ROB-B-HOOD

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

AGOT ISIDRO

OUR "FURKIDS" TYSON AND FRED ARE Labrador Retrievers. Tyson (chocolate brown) is three years old. Fred (golden brown) will turn five next month. My husband (Manu Sandejas) and I give them lots of TLC (tender, loving care). Fred needs extra attention because of a renal ailment. He goes to the vet once a month for a checkup. They eat food—chicken, veggies and rice—especially prepared for them. Fred is sweet and loves to cuddle. Tyson is like a cute, naughty little boy. He snores! They make a great welcoming party. They jump for joy when we come home. We can't sleep unless they're in bed with us. We give them weekly baths and take them on daily walks. We love bringing them to UP, Eastwood and Tali Beach.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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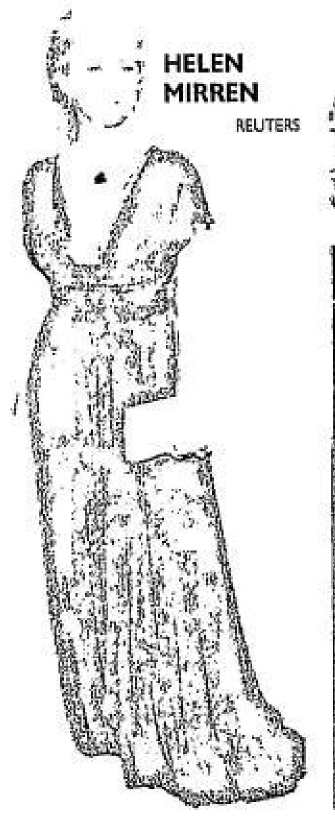
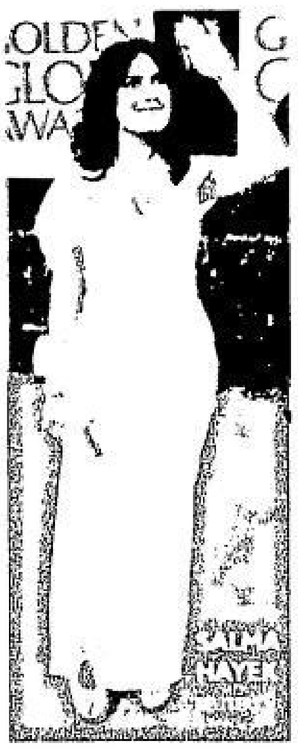
3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTRESS BEST SCREENPLAY
SAN FRANCISCO FILM CRITICS CIRCLE
WINNER
BEST PICTURE
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR BEST SCREENPLAY
Temptation
Perversion
Deception
Little Children
Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson
OPENS JAN. 24

At the Golden Globes



HELEN MIRREN REUTERS



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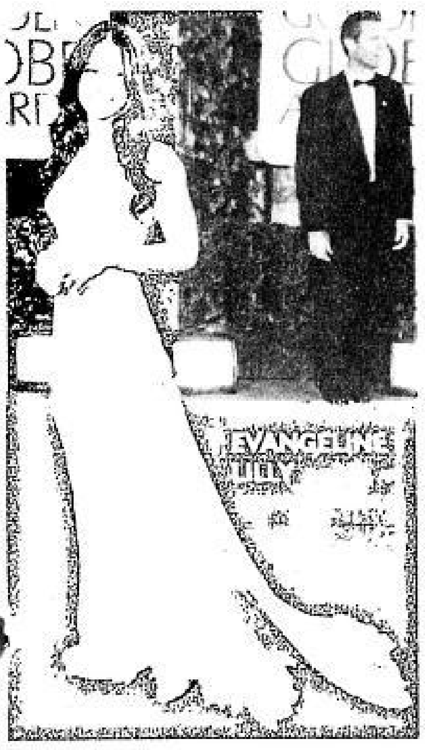
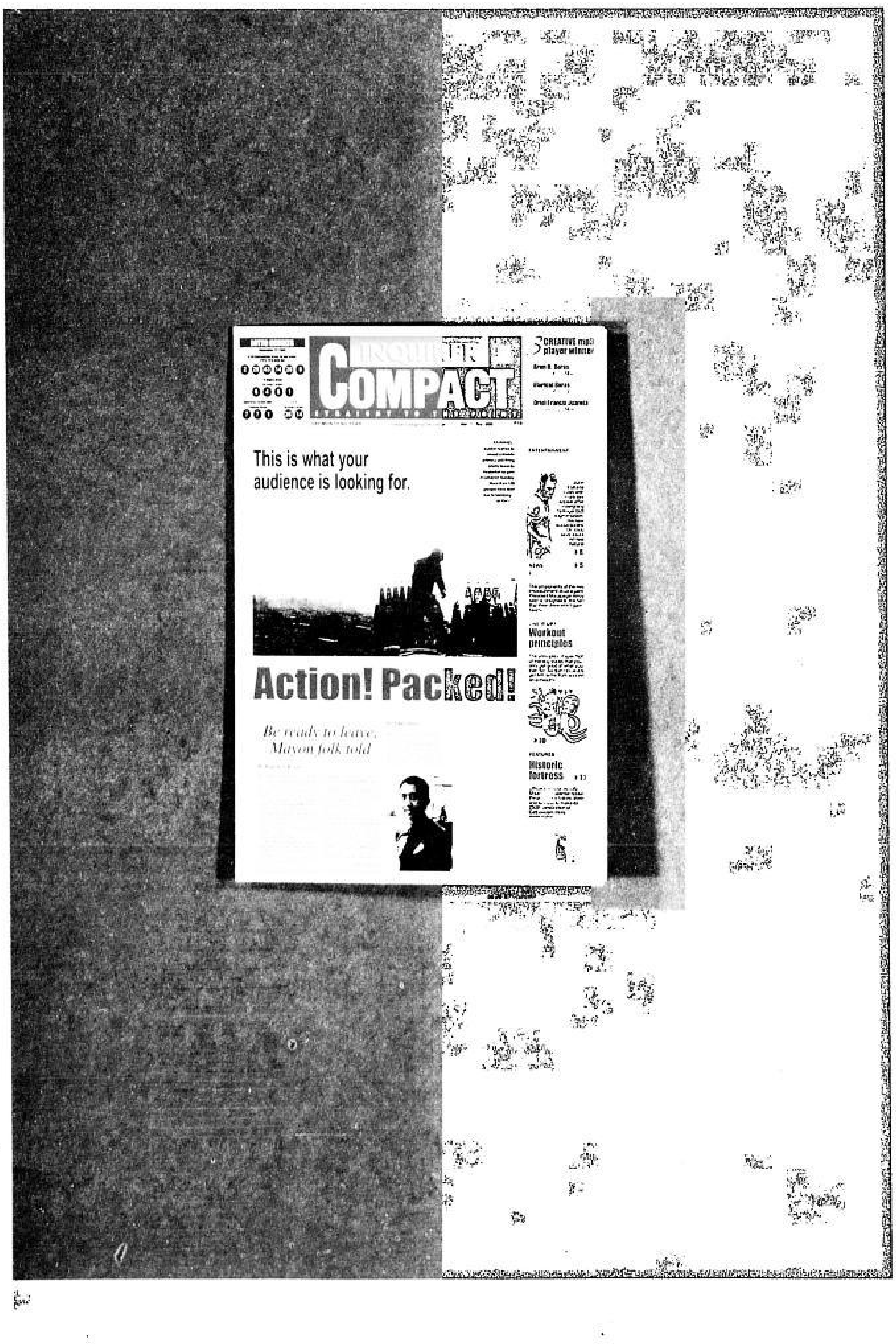


EVANGELINE LILLY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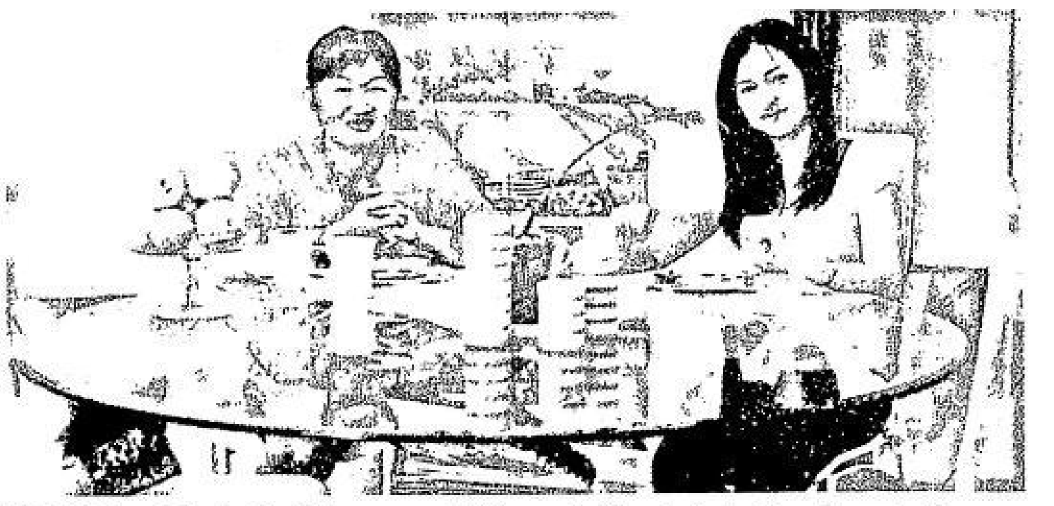

HAVING breakfast in the dining room with Mommy Lydia, who helped her decorate the different rooms.

A sweet reward

From page G1

Julia Roberts Dakota Fanning Steve Buscemi John Cleese Oprah Winfrey
Cedric The Entertainer Kathy Bates Reba McEntire Robert Redford Thomas Haden Church André Benjamin
Charlotte's Web
Help Is Coming From Above
Released through Solar Entertainment Corporation
IN THEATERS JANUARY 31

she bought the place.

"She worked hard for this. After only three years in show biz, she has already achieved a lot," Lydia quips, beaming.

"I save my earnings in the bank. I can really be thrifty. I don't buy anything unless it's very important," she points out.

She has very few indulgences (namely, perfume and shoes) and insists that they're tools of the trade.

She similarly makes fine use of her latest acquisitions—the guitar and drum set—in her music career, especially since she's now trying her hand in songwriting.

"I've been playing the guitar since I was in first year high school. Now, my dad Noli (Pineda) is teaching me how to play the drums," she relates.

Ah, she only asks the neighbors to be patient…

TODAY

Philippine Daily Inc quirer, the
most widely read pub
the country is now c
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broadsheet. Inquirer C

News

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Comics

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Compact is divided into nine main sections, covering multiple aspects of a reader's lifestyle. All the sections are tailorfit to suit the market's taste, needs and preferences

Sports
Entertainment

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C1,C2,D
Male and Female
18-35 years old

The Cosmopolitan: curious, smart, opinionated: sophisticated locals who value time, information and knowledge. They want news that's concise and precise

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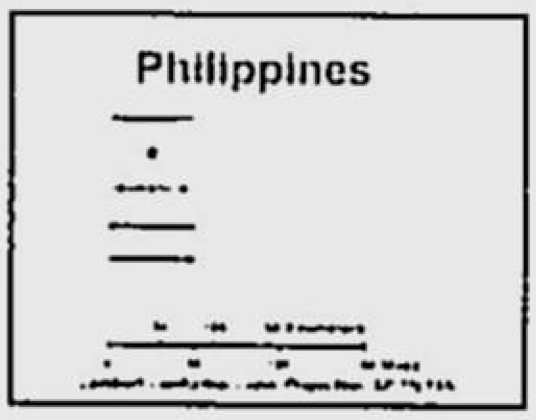

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7 New cars for 2007

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The New year is expected to witness a flurry of activities from car manufacturers. This early, Ford has already launched four new models, including the all-new Everest. In the coming months, expect the following fresh sets of wheels to roll from the showrooms near you.

Toyota Corolla

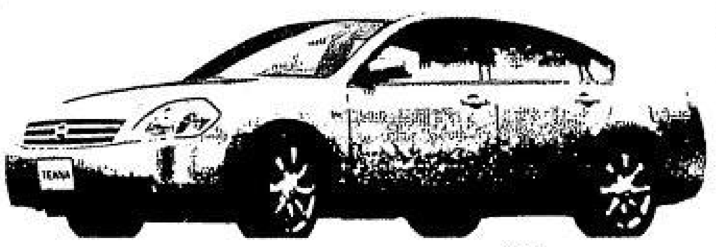
The Japanese giant is poised to overtake General Motors as the world's number one car maker soon. And in the Philippines, it intends to continue its decades-old dominance by introducing the next generation of its best-selling sedan for the last 40 years, the Corolla.

The 10th generation Corolla is rumored to be coming out in the next few months. Designed to appeal to European customers seeking both a classic sedan configuration and striking, dynamic styling, the new Corolla is bigger in all dimensions but has the same wheelbase as its predecessor.

The new Corolla will have a 1.6-liter dual VVTi engine and D4D 125 diesel engine (available in Europe) mated to a 6-speed manual or 5-speed automatic transmission. Its interior space has been increased considerably, with more headroom and legroom, and 15 storage bins have been added to supplement the already bigger trunk.

Nissan Teana

Previewed during Nissan's media Christmas party, the Teana will replace the Cefiro and will officially be Nissan's flagship sedan in the Philippines starting this year.



With a stylish, balanced exterior, the Teana has a distinct sense of dynamism and hints of the exceptional roominess and comfort inside. It runs on the famed VQ engine and was designed with Nissan's "Triple Safety" features that include Xenon headlamps, a Vehicle Dynamic Control system, active head restraints and curtain and side airbags.

The Teana is proudly made in Japan.

Mitsubishi Lancer

After years of cosmetic improvements, finally the all-new Lancer is arriving this year. The new-generation Lancer has a more sporty look with a pair of squinting headlights and an arched hood. It promises driven-to-thrill dynamics, class-up value, advanced safety and cutting-edge user-technology in an ag-

CARS/ H2

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- All plans subject to bank approval.
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7 New cars for 2007

From page H1

gressively styled body.

Powered by an all-new 2.0-liter Mivec engine, the new Lancer can go from zero to 100 kph in under eight seconds. It runs on Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) with Sportronic that fits perfectly its sporty intentions.

Honda CR-V

The CR-V has been dramatically transformed, both outside and inside. The exterior design of the new CR-V combines a strong, tough lower body with a sporty cabin to achieve a refined look. The spare tire is now under the floor and the tailgate opens vertically. The door on the passenger side features a built-in prism under-mirror, eliminating the need for the fender-mounted side under-mirror used in the previous model.

The engine is a 166 hp, 2.4-liter i-VTEC with 5-speed automatic transmission. The new Real-Time 4WD system conveys 20 percent more torque to the rear wheels. The Stability Assist System and an array of new safety features now come as standard. The suspension settings have also been optimized to match the larger, wider tires, to achieve better handling.

BMW X5

From the more powerful, more fuel-efficient engine to the roomier interior, no detail of the all-new BMW X5 was left untouched. Thanks to lighter materials, smarter technology and seven years of diligence, the new X5 provides a totally fresh driving experience. The new inline-6 engine generates 260 hp while the 8-cylinder produces 350 hp.

For the first time, the X5 comes with a third-row seat. It offers more cargo space, leather seats with 20-way adjustments, 10 interior fans, 4-zone climate control and a rear seat entertainment system. Safety features include the standard run-flat tires and a Dynamic Stability Control system with a rollover sensor.

Porsche Cayenne

Four years after its debut, Porsche is bringing the second-generation Cayenne with more powerful engines that promise lower fuel consumption. The new Cayenne is equipped with the new Dynamic Chassis Control roll stabilizer system that significantly reduces body roll during cornering. When off-road, the system increases axle articulation for improved traction.

The new Cayenne has a powerful and highly distinctive presence and the styling, significant improved aerodynamic efficiency. The headlights are narrower and now feature projector-beam units. Revised front air intakes improve cooling and engine performance. The wheel arches are more heavily contoured and the rear of every Cayenne now includes a diffuser-style apron and new roof spoiler.

Volvo S80

Externally, the new Volvo S80 looks very much like its predecessor, although it is a little wider and taller. The all-new S80 is the first Volvo sedan with a V8 engine, as well as the fist sedan with a highly sophisticated 6-cylinder engine. Both are mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission with Geartronic sequential shifting. All the S80 V8s are equipped with the electronically controlled All-Wheel-Drive feature while the V6s are front-wheel drive.

New discounts, services for AAP members

GOODYEAR TIRES – AAP members can buy Goodyear tires at special prices from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 at all Goodyear Servitek outlets. Each AAP member can avail of the special price, on cash basis only, for a maximum of 10 tires per year which is equivalent to two vehicles. The AAP discount is separate from other Goodyear promotions and should there be a difference between the special AAP price and the ongoing promo, the lower price will be applied. In case of a price increase, Goodyear will give AAP a 15-day prior notice and extend AAP members a 30-day grace period to enjoy old prices, provided stocks are available.

GOODYEAR SERVITEK SERVICES – AAP members are entitled to a 10-percent discount for car repairs and services at Servitek outlets.

AAP CAR BATTERY – AAP has formed a co-branding partnership to produce an AAP-Outlast Super Premium battery that will be sold at the lowest prices to AAP members.

MANCOR AUTOTECHNIKA SERVICES – AAP members will be given maximum discount privileges on services offered by Mancor Autotechnika, specifically 77-point Diagnostic Check, MVIS (Motor Vehicle Inspection System), vehicle repair, maintenance and power tuning. Mancor is located at 32nd Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila.

COMPLETE LIST – For a complete list of AAP partner establishments and prices of the Goodyear tires and AAP-Outlast batteries, visit AAP's website at www.aaphilippines.org or send a text message to AAP (0918-8126000 for Smart and 0917-8126000 for Globe) with your fax number or e-mail address. AAP will send the updated list to you.

Motorsports awards set Feb. 8

THE COUNTRY'S TOP RACE car drivers will be honored on Feb. 8 during the AAP's "Annual Motorsports Awards" at the Valle Verde Country Club.

AAP Motorsports committee chair Mandy Eduque announced that top drivers from five motorsports disciplines would be feted. The five ruled the series of races held through the past year.

Leading the awardees is Filipino-Italian Matteo Guidecelli of Cebu who emerged as the 2006 Karter of the Year. The good-looking karter from Cebu upstaged Asian karting champion Michele Bumgarner to win his first ever AAP title.

Dave Joto of Transtech-Blanche Racing is the awardee for drag racing after he topped the five-race National Championships at the Batangas Racing Circuit while Noel Rivera of Big Chill Racing is the champion in the Race Motorsports Club series of slalom events.

Veteran driver Jody Coseteng was again the year's overall winner in the Philippine National Touring Championships, earning him another Circuit Race Driver of the Year title.

Eduque said the awardee for 4x4 Off-Road Racing will only be known on Jan. 21 after the deciding last race in Mangima town, Bukidnon.

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MERCEDES-Benz E280 Elegance, Chrysler 300C V6 and Audi A6 3.0 TDi Quattro

Cagi welcomes the new year with premium cars testfest

THE CAR AWARDS GROUP INC (CAgi), the association of motoring media behind the annual Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) awards, welcomed the New Year with a luxury and ultra-luxury car testfest.

The premium cars' testfest was held on the weekend of Jan. 6 and 7 at Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo and involved three cars introduced as 2006 models: the Audi A6 3.0 TDi, Mercedes-Benz E280 Elegance and the Chrysler 300C V6, the latter as the 2005 Luxury Car of the Year winner.

The BMW 540d, the 2005 Ultra-Luxury Car of the Year winner, was unavailable. PGA Cars also sent an Audi A4 2.0 for the luxury car category but it was not included this year as it had already been tested in the 2005 Coty and did not win.

As with previous testfests held November 2006 at Forest Hills, the premium cars testfest had two phases: an instrumented test and a qualitative test. In the instrumented phase on a flat straight of 400 meters, the entries were subjected to a zero to 60 kph acceleration test followed by a 60 kph to zero braking test. Each car's performance was recorded on a G-Tech meter supplied by Speedlab and tabulated on a laptop computer.

The qualitative phase had motoring journalists driving each car to evaluate innovation, design, handling, ride quality, safety, driver satisfaction and value for money. The quali test was conducted on a challenging predetermined six-kilometer route around Forest Hills with steep uphill and downhill segments, sharp curves, twists, bends and an occasional dip to test performance, handling and driveability. The quali test course is isolated and distant from the golf course and houses so that the cars would not disturb anyone.

Making sure that motoring journalists followed the testfest rules were former race car drivers now motor sport marshals / ALSO (Applied Leisure in Sales and Operations) members Raul Asuncion, Joey Lanuza and Ernie Reyes.

The premium cars testfest followed a price-based classification scheme used in previous testfests. The Chrysler 300C V6 at P2.65 million qualified for the Luxury Car Category (P2.6 million – P3.99 million) aside from being the defending champion. The Audi A6 3.0 TDi at P5.35 million and the Mercedes-Benz E280 Elegance at P4.88 million competed in the Ultra-Luxury Car Category (P4 million to P6 million).

On Nov. 11 and 12, 2006 testfests, five subcompact cars and three compact cars were evaluated while on Nov. 25 and 26, five executive cars costing from P1.1 million to P2.6 million each were tested.

This weekend's testfest, Jan. 20 and 21, will feature Entry-Level Sport Utility Vehicles costing P1.6 million or below. Seven SUVs are included: Hyundai Santa Fe, Kia Sportage, Isuzu Alterra, Subaru Forester 2.5 XT, Toyota RAV4 4WD, Suzuki Vitara 2.5 SL and Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6, the latter as the 2005 Entry-Level SUV of the Year.

Automobile Association Philippines supports Cagi as Road Safety Partner of Car of the Year 2006. The other Coty 2006 partners and sponsors are Philippine Allied Corp, distributor of Bridgestone Tires; Petron; Sony Ericsson; Manila International Auto Show; Standard Insurance Co; Manila North Tollways Corp; Rockwell Land; Forest Hills Golf & Country Club; and SGV & Co.

FIA aims to make roads safe

THE FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUtomobile (FIA) and its member clubs have declared their commitment to play a leading role in global road safety advocacy and the promotion of safer drivers, safer cars and safer roads. The FIA Declaration on Global Road Safety to "Make Roads Safe" was approved and signed by representatives of member clubs who attended the FIA general assembly in Barcelona last October. Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), the FIA's member club in the Philippines, was represented by directors Mandy Eduque and Angel Kanapi. In its declaration, the FIA promised to support the United Nations Global Road Safety Week (April 23 to 29, 2007) and to encourage all FIA member clubs to participate fully in the Week's activities which will highlight the theme of the safety of young road users and children. The FIA recommended that all countries identify a lead agency to develop national road safety action plans, adopt realistic but achievable casualty reduction targets, develop RTI (road traffic deaths and injuries) prevention measures based on local assessment and data, and work closely with motoring organizations and other relevant stakeholders for the effective implementation of the action plan. The progress made on Global Road Safety and the recommendations in the FIA Declaration will be reviewed at the FIA General Assembly in 2009.

Making motoring fun

by Gus Lagman, AAP President

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF AUTOMObile Association Philippines (AAP)!

Many of you may not be familiar with AAP. I can't blame you, for AAP is a fairly new name. But the organization it represents - the Philippine Motor Association - has been here since 1931. AAP and the PMA you used to hear about are one and the same. The Association's board of directors decided in 2001 to change the PMA name to AAP, since most auto clubs all over the world had the "AA" in their names.

The PMA was born on May 25, 1931 in Manila. Its founding fathers included the Who's Who of politics and business in those days, such as Executive Secretary Jorge B. Vargas (who was the "Little President" during Quezon's time), General Carlos P. Romulo, the only Filipino and first Asian to become president of the United Nations General Assembly and several American and Filipino businessmen. Though outnumbered, the Filipinos were given the two most important positions in the PMA's board - Vargas as president and Romulo as treasurer.

There were only 243 members in the PMA's first year and the Association held office at the government-controlled Manila Hotel. After World War II, the PMA was revived and was led for almost 30 years by Don Benito F. Legarda. In 1973, Dr. Manuel Lim took over and after him came Don Juan Tuason (1981), lawyer Conrado R. Ayuyao (1982), architect Carlos D. Arguelles (1999), Antonio L. Mapa (2003) and yours truly in 2005.

AAP now has 75,000 members and is the only organization in the country authorized under an Executive Order (by President Elpidio Quirino) to issue International Driving Permits. And being the official representative of the International Automobile Federation (FIA), AAP is also the sole authority on Philippine motor sports.

On top of these, AAP also operates the National Driving Academy (NDA), the best and most affordable driving school in the country. Aside from basic, advanced and refresher driving courses, the NDA offers Driver Certification Tests to help companies and employers evaluate their drivers. Multinational corporations, especially those in the pharmaceutical field, avail of our service for their medical representatives before they are assigned cars to drive.

I need not emphasize anymore AAP's lineup of benefits for its members, such as hefty discounts on tires, batteries, insurance and other motoring-related products; 24/7 emergency roadside service; ambulance service; accident investigation assistance and motor vehicle registration assistance which all come free of charge together with free personal accident insurance worth P300,000, windshield etching service (for security purposes) and a lot more.

What I want to stress is why we do all these things. We do all these to serve our members in particular and the motoring public in general. Ultimately, we know that at the end of the day, we will be judged for what we have done for Filipino motorists.

You are welcome to join our club. If you have more questions, e-mail info@aap.org.ph or call AAP at (02)723-0808.

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Clearing house proposed for CTPL

PRIVATE CAR OWNERS HAVE FINALLY SPOKEN. They want the private sector to continue handling the Compulsory Third Party Liability (CTPL) insurance business.

Since last year, two forces have been quarreling over the lucrative CTPL business. Recently, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Philippine Insurers & Reinsurers Association (Pira) both presented their respective solutions to the problems hounding the CTPL at a forum in which AAP was the co-presentor with Ateneo de Manila University's Economic Policy Reform and Advocacy (Epra).

Epra project director and Inquirer business columnist Cielito Habito, former head of the National Economic & Development Authority (Neda), was moderator of the forum.

Requirement

AAP director Mandy Eduque said the CTPL over the years has become an ordinary piece of paper—a mere requirement for vehicle registration. He believes strict regulation is needed to restore the integrity of the CTPL.

But Eduque stressed that members of AAP would not want a single company or agency to have a monopoly of the CTPL business which rakes in P3 billion annually. "We still want an open market where the customer has the freedom to choose from whom to buy his or her CTPL insurance," Eduque said. "Besides, the government has enough problems to take care of. It's better to leave the CTPL in the hands of the private sector."

In contrast, GSIS Vice President Antonio Resurreccion told the forum that the government pension fund is pushing for an integrated vehicle registration system wherein the CTPL insurance would be combined with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) registration fee.

Clearing house

Pira, on the other hand, said a clearing house similar to what banks use in clearing checks would be more effective for the CTPL. The clearing house, to be owned by the 94 companies under Pira, will function as an intermediary between customers and the LTO, with payments being made through automatic debit arrangements with commercial banks.

But Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo, who attended the forum, proposed instead that the Insurance Commission itself put up and manage the clearing house together with the LTO.

Open market

Escobillo pointed out that since the system would be owned and operated by the government, it would result in two government agencies—the Insurance Commission and the LTO—checking on each other. At the same time, it preserves the open market system.

During the same forum, Escobillo announced that her agency is doubling the P50,000 coverage of CTPL insurance to P100,000 starting this year with no increase in the premium.

NEW INSURANCE DEAL
Federal Phoenix will be the AAP's insurance partner for 2007. Signing the deal are (seated, from left) AAP treasurer Jogy Mantaring, AAP president Gus Lagman, Federal Phoenix president Mon Dimacali, and Federal Phoenix AVP Maricel Cahanding. Standing behind them are (from left) AAP director Nona Esquivel and Federal Phoenix officers Celeste Gallardo and Joel Gliane.

GOOD YEAR FOR AAP
Goodyear Philippines will be giving big discounts to all AAP members this 2007. Signing the agreement between Goodyear Philippines and AAP are Goodyear sales director Rey Ibarra (seated, 3rd from left) and AAP president Gus Lagman. Also shown are (seated, from left) AAP treasurer Jogy Mantaring, AAP vice president Johnny Angeles, (standing, from left) AAP corporate secretary lawyer Nestor Mejia, AAP directors Gen. Angel Kanapi, Nona Esquivel, Aida Sevilla Mendoza, Goodyear's Mawel Sanches and Gerry Alava, and AAP director Mandy Eduque.

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- Smoked Headlamps

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- Single In-dash CD/MP3 Player with Tuner

Performance
- Fuel Efficient

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